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BURKE'S WORKS.

LIFE, BY PRIOR.



L I F E
OF THE
RIGHT HONOURABLE
EDMUND BURKE.

BY
JAMES PRIOR, ESQ., F.S.A.,
AUTHOR OF THE LIFE OF GOLDSMITH, ETC.

FIFTH EDITION.
REVISED BY THE AUTHOR.

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TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

JOHN WILSON CROKER,

ETC. ETC.

SIR,

An attempt to sketch the life and character of one of the greatest statesmen of modern times, or perhaps of any age, may with propriety be addressed to one of his eminent countrymen; who is himself connected with that part of Ireland where Mr. Burke spent his earlier years and also with his family; who acquired his relish for learning in the same venerable academic retreat; who possesses much of his taste, much of his love for the Fine Arts, much of his literary talent, and no ordinary share of his laborious devotion to public business.

That it is quite worthy of a man so distinguished, I am by no means vain enough to believe. To render full justice to his various genius and acquirements, demands some of his own powers. But the design may indicate desire at least to appreciate true greatness. I am anxious therefore to render all the honours that are his due—more especially for the successful defence of those venerable institutions of our country which he so thoroughly understood and valued, and by their influence over the English people saved not only our National independence but even the semblance of freedom in Europe, in that long and fearful struggle now happily terminated.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most faithful, and obedient servant,

JAMES PRIOR.

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ADVERTISEMENT TO THE FIFTH EDITION.

THE favour extended to this biography for many years, as shewn by the sale of several large editions, has occasioned the demand for a new issue. In conformity with the spirit of the times, a more popular form is assumed, so as to bring the volume within the reach of that large and increasing class of readers who desire to have standard works in a portable compass, and of others whose thirst for information on topics of general interest may exceed their means of acquiring it. With this view, the work has undergone careful revision. No abbreviation has been made in the narrative, which, on the contrary, is rendered more full by additions and references to the correspondence of its subject. Those letters only have been omitted that possess little immediate connexion with the occurrences of Burke's life, and which will find a more appropriate place in the body of his works.

It is satisfactory to state, in testimony of the care with which the work was originally written, that in the many volumes of contemporary men and history since published, or in the four volumes of correspondence issued under the care of Earl Fitzwilliam and Sir Richard Bourke, no incident that I have mentioned is contradicted, and no new one has been added. ²

The sources indeed whence I drew my information, rendered the omission of any event of moment improbable. To those formerly noticed, may be added the following: The recollections of Mr. Burke's niece, Mrs. Haviland, for several years an inmate of her uncle's house, as communicated by her son; those of Mr. Shackleton, Burke's schoolfellow, and of his daughter Mrs. Leadbeater, with both of whom frequent correspondence was maintained; several others of his private friends and correspondents to whom occasional reference occurs; while from another contemporary source, materials previously unknown were put into my hands illustrative of his studies and pursuits while in Trinity College, of which it will be seen occasional use is made.

Altogether, these furnish evidence of early formation of character, and indicate how truly the predilections of the youth were destined to shine forth in the man. Few readers but will find interest in tracing out such a career. Personally I cannot but feel gratified at having lent my humble aid to the more just representation of his motives and character at a time when there was a disposition to throw censure upon both, by the surviving members of an angry, because discomfited, order of politicians, who had never forgiven their overthrow on the questions connected with Revolutionary France. Nor are the anticipations in the original preface to this publication less fully verified, namely, that the misconstructions to which he had been subjected would soon cease; that esteem no less than fame awaited him; and that while receding from the fleeting passions and contentions of the day, he would ascend to that position among the first order of mankind, where according to the estimate of the distinguished men of the last and of the present age, as will be seen in the sixteenth chapter of this work, he has no superior and scarcely an equal.

NORFOLK CRESCENT,
September, 1854.

ADVERTISEMENT TO THE SECOND EDITION.

IN presenting a second and much enlarged edition of this work to the public, the writer cannot omit to express his acknowledgments for the favourable reception experienced by the first; not only from the periodical censors of literature who assume to guide public taste, but from private testimonies of approbation afforded by persons of the very first consideration and talents in the country.* Opinions which would seem to be confirmed by the sale of a large impression of the work in no very considerable space of time.

This encouragement induced corresponding diligence on his part, to endeavour, by every available means, to add to its interest and correctness; and the inquiry and research resorted to with this view though laborious, have not been in vain. The additional matter collected, almost the whole of which is original, adds nearly a second volume to the work, and has necessarily caused a new arrangement in many parts for its introduction in the order of time, while other passages are wholly re-written. The work may thence be considered in many parts new. This plan he conceived to be more systematic and desirable than merely to give a supplemental volume of disjointed letters, anecdotes, and fragments thrown together without such coherence as their nature and importance deserved.

For the information thus received the writer is indebted to a variety of sources upon which he can place implicit reliance. Some of these are noticed in the progress of the volumes. Several persons to whom he is obliged, think it obtrusive or unnecessary to give their names to the world upon circumstances of lighter moment in themselves, or which carry with them in substance a sufficient guarantee of authenticity. He should be ungrateful however not to avow

* The late Earl of Liverpool, when Prime Minister; Mr. Canning, when Secretary of State; Sir Robert Peel, Sir James Mackintosh, and many others of high political position.

in a particular manner his acknowledgments to the Hon. Sir William C. Smith, Bart., F.R.S., Second Baron of the Court of Exchequer in Ireland, for the documents with which he has been obliging enough to favour him. He is likewise indebted for some contributions to the late Mr. James Gomme, F.S.A., who died shortly after they were communicated. But more especially his thanks are due to Thomas Haviland Burke, Esq. of Lincoln's Inn, grand nephew and nearest surviving relative to Mr. Burke, and no less near to him in the virtues of the heart than in blood, and who, from the satisfaction which the writer has derived from his personal acquaintance, he must consider to require only more time and opportunities to display no inconsiderable portion of the talents of his family. He has been kind enough to supply every document and information in his power for these volumes.

To advert to the criticisms passed upon the work will not be thought necessary further than to acknowledge the conciliatory and approving spirit in which they are generally couched. It is satisfactory also to find that the plan chalked out by the writer for himself, of touching very briefly upon the parliamentary and other great public labours of Mr. Burke, which are already embodied in the history of the country as well as in other works of general interest and of course accessible to every description of reader, has been approved.

Much of the favour shewn to the author arises no doubt from the great popularity of his subject with the best informed and reflecting order of men. But it is not to be denied, that there is in this country a considerable number of politicians, who from strong bias in judgment, or peculiarity of opinion upon certain constitutional points, persist in censuring the conduct of Mr. Burke for the part he took on the question of the French Revolution, although it might be supposed that observation and the progress of events, independent of all argument, had confirmed the accuracy of his views on that matter beyond dispute.

It was not therefore with much surprise that he lately (1825) saw an attempt, under cover of a criticism on his book, to maintain that Mr. Burke was so far mistaken in his assertion of there being no good likely to result from the Revolution, that France had at length acquired by it that

freedom for which she had so long contended. This statement does not fairly give his argument. He never said, or believed, that she was condemned to such a state of perpetual, irreversible slavery, that no accident in the progress of time could extricate her from it. What he really said and enforced was, that her Revolution of which she was at first so proud, contained no one principle of which a wise and good man could approve; that its acts, means, and purposes were indefensible; and that in itself it was not likely to lead to any system of rational freedom. Experience has taught us that it did not voluntarily introduce or attempt to introduce, any such system.

Another critical remark about France having contended for the establishment of her constitutional freedom, is so notoriously contrary to fact, that the wonder has been how perseveringly the nation struggled against it. She never, in fact, seriously set about seeking it; neither did she by the exertion of any wisdom, talent, or intelligence of her own, win it. The freedom, or the rudiments of freedom now enjoyed, were thrust upon her. A series of fortuitous circumstances which she not only did not forward, but on the contrary opposed by every means in her power, led to the production and establishment of the Charter. That important measure, therefore, so far from being her own work, was the business of the combined armies of Europe.

We may fairly question whether she ever possessed clear conceptions of the blessings of a free constitution, or understood anything of how it was to be introduced or managed. For with the example of England before her, which might be considered a sufficient guard against committing gross mistakes, she plunged every succeeding year from her first efforts deeper and deeper into error; floundering from simple financial embarrassments into general anarchy; from anarchy into a system of massacre and tyranny; from this into the crude and impracticable scheme of a directory; from a directory into a poor imitation of the consular government of ancient Rome; and from this pedantic folly into the next and natural stage, a grinding military despotism. In all this series of changes there was no approach to the establishment of consistent, steady, practical liberty. And at the beginning of 1814 she had neither in fact nor in appearance advanced one step nearer to obtaining it, than in 1714 or any other

period of her history ; nor was likely so to do, had not the wild ambition of her ruler led to his downfall and to the general change in her institutions. Consequently France has no claim to be considered her own liberator. So far from it she struggled hard to continue enslaved, and was at length only by defeat and misfortune drubbed out of her propensity for the restraints of absolute government. While a constitutional system, the most valuable present that could possibly be made to any nation, worth more than all the conquests ever effected had she been permitted to retain them all, has been a gift from her conquerors—not her own acquisition.

So little therefore did her revolution, with all its spoliations, proscriptions, terrors, massacres, and wars, for more than twenty-two years, effect for its nominal aim—that of giving freedom and security to her people. And so fully was the anticipation of Mr. Burke verified, that an event which inflicted and permitted so many evils, could scarcely, when left to itself be productive of good.

P R E F A C E.

Few things interest the curiosity of mankind more, or prove so instructive in themselves, as to trace the progress of a powerful mind, by the honourable exertion of native energies, rising amid serious obstructions and difficulties from a private condition to stations of public eminence and trust, and in its progress acquiring the power to rule, or to influence the destiny of nations.

Such a person, as sprung not from the privileged few, but from among the mass of the people, we feel to be one of ourselves. Our sympathies go along with him in his career. The young imagine that it may possibly be their own case. The old, with a glance of retrospective regret, may fancy that, with a little more of the favour of fortune, it might have been theirs. And, at any rate, we are anxious to ascertain the causes of his superiority, to treasure up his experience, to profit by what he experienced to be useful, to avoid what he found to be disadvantageous. The lesson becomes doubly instructive to that large class of society who are born to be the architects of their own fortune when it impresses the great truth, that natural endowments however great, receive their highest polish and power, their only secure reward, from diligent study--from continued, unwearied application—a homely faculty within the reach of all men; one whose fruits, as they bear testimony to the industry of the possessor and intrinsic value of the possession, are above all others likely to wear well. Of the great results of such endowments, fostered and directed by such cultivation, we have not a more distinguished example than Edmund Burke.

To an attentive reader of our political and literary history during the sixty years that are past,* no name will more frequently attract attention, whether we consider the large space he occupied in the public eye, the original genius he possessed, the diversified talents he displayed, the great events connected with the whole of his public life, and the alternate eulogy and abuse by which since the period of the French Revolution, his reputation has been assailed.

* This was written in 1824.

Two slight accounts of this remarkable man have been written. One was a volume of slander, dictated by envenomed party spirit and probably meant at the moment to answer some party purpose. The other was more just to his deserts; but both were wholly deficient in facts, very little being stated or known of his family or early life until his connexion with the Marquis of Rockingham and subsequent entry into Parliament. Obvious as this deficiency in political biography was, accident suggested to the present writer the attempt to supply it. Contemplating his qualities natural and acquired, and his career at large as extraordinary and successful, he drew up a character of him at some length in the autumn of 1819, which being thrown by for above two years without further notice, chanced when lying on his desk to come under the notice of a friend, who recommended that it should be enlarged and altered from the form it then bore: for that as it stood some parts would be obscure to the general reader, some liable to mistake or misapplication, and some, perhaps unintelligible if not grounded upon a memoir. This additional labour was undertaken certainly without regret. Some new materials were already in the writer's hands, and by application to various friends in England and Ireland, a variety of others, chiefly unknown to the world and of undoubted authenticity were procured. And as illustrative of his opinions, criticisms, and style of correspondence, as well of the friendly as of the more formal description, several letters have been added, little or not at all familiar to the public eye.

An extended detail of his career, embracing minute exposition of labours in Parliament, in Westminster Hall on the prosecution of Hastings, or of his published works, together with lengthened notices of American, India, French or other important public affairs with which he was much concerned, was not deemed necessary. Judicious biography does not require this. To make such a work long, deprives it of half its interest. Besides, such labours make part of the history of the country, and would overload any private memoir beyond the time or patience of ordinary readers. Nor would I forget the dictum of the eminent man whose life is here recorded "that a great book is a great evil." I have aimed therefore not to make a great book, but a compact one; to condense within a moderate compass all that was necessary

to be known and which few would seek in the ponderous form of two or more quartos. The particulars of his exertions in the various scenes alluded to will be found in his works, in four volumes of speeches printed by an anonymous editor in 1816, and in specific histories of the events with which he was connected. Here it is only necessary to mention them in brief. The notices in explanation or illustration are chiefly drawn from himself and in his own words.

Great as is the reputation of this eminent man, it stands so far as party feelings are concerned, in rather a singular predicament. It is well known that he would not go all lengths with any body of men, and constantly declined to fall in with popular humours, of the tendency of which he had the smallest doubt. A contrary plan would have insured to him, as it did to others, a great increase of general favour; but he was a man of no compromises excepting under the pressure of irresistible necessity, and then yielded only with a bad grace. *Right*, under whatever circumstances, appears to have been his predominant passion. Thus he had an utter abhorrence of any thing resembling undue exercise of power or domination no matter from what quarter it proceeded; and by endeavouring to preserve a certain balance of powers in the state as well as in different orders of the community and in the different interests, religious, political, and commercial of the kingdom by stepping in to the assistance of the weak against the strong, which is beyond dispute the duty of honest patriotism and sound wisdom, he incurred censure from the more violent or domineering of every class. He was assailed by the zealots of power for opposing the coercion of America, and for prosecuting Mr. Hastings; by the zealots of freedom for opposing French Revolution; by zealots in religion for advocating the cause of the dissenters and Roman Catholics; and by zealots of various descriptions in affairs of less moment. Many reasons might be adduced why he was not always at the head of the party whose cause he chiefly espoused; the chief of which perhaps were, that he wanted that consequence from birth, fortune, and family connexion, which with great abilities and amiable private qualities, centred in Mr. Fox.

While, therefore, the two great divisions in politics of Whig and Tory, the former more especially, have deemed it a species of allegiance to endeavour to depress his name for the purpose of exalting those of their particular leaders:

and a more violent though a small body, known under various appellations have sworn ceaseless enmity for his overthrow of their doctrines during the revolutionary fever in France, no special party remained on whom devolved the obligation of upholding his fame. The old Whig connexion of which he was so long the tongue and the soul, ought to have performed this duty, but they wanted vigour, or had become merged in other parties. Depreciation and abuse from political adversaries have in consequence been suffered to remain uncontradicted. If he did not write and speak himself into repute, nobody else perhaps can do it for him; no one else certainly has hitherto attempted it. He has been left to the buoyancy of his own merits; to sink or swim in public opinion by intrinsic powers. "For what I have been," said he, "I put myself upon my country;" and among the educated and dispassionate part of it he has no reason to complain of the decision. He has worked his way into general esteem, not by the applauding pens of intoxicated followers, but by more eloquent though less noisy advocates—by the slow but steady and sure evolution of national sentiment, by the living and flourishing evidences to his deserts of a constitution preserved from demolition or inroad, an unshaken throne, an unpolluted altar, an unplundered nobility and gentry, and the continuance of those moral ties and habitudes which bind together and form the safeguard of the whole.

Misrepresentation indeed may answer its end for a time. And were it not indicative of angry or mistaken feeling, it would be curious to observe the ignorance or prejudice respecting the sentiments of Burke on a variety of public matters by persons who at a venture attribute to him any thing that happens to be unpopular at the moment—circumstances in which he had no participation or interest, and principles which he opposed and disclaimed. In this spirit the reverend president of a political society at Liverpool not long ago stigmatised him as a deserter from the cause of parliamentary reform; and more than one of the orators of civic assemblies in London, amid other flying reproaches just as much founded in truth, repeated the accusation. At two or three county meetings held some time back, he was spoken of as a sinecure placeman and enemy to liberty. At a large book establishment in London, on inquiring for a volume in which it was said there was something concerning at

him, "a satire, sir, I suppose," was the reply; as if satire was the legitimate coin with which his public labours deserved to be repaid. In a private company of that consideration in society in which I least expected to hear observations thrown out of an illiberal or untrue description, his motives in the impeachment of Hastings were sharply arraigned by some members of what is called the *Indian interest*, though on being pushed for facts, none of the party could assign any thing like an improper motive. In another company, less select but of some consideration, he was admitted to be a most surprising man, but unhappily opposed to the reformation of all abuses in government. In a third he was an ingenious and able writer, but too *flowery* in his style. In a fourth, his political conduct was said to be regulated by regard merely to his own interests. In a fifth, probably from the want of some better handle for censure, it was gravely urged as a drawback upon his fame, that he originally possessed no private property; nay that he was humble enough to receive the profits of his literary labours, and that at length he accepted of a pension;—so that, by this ingenious argument the original sin charged against him of want of fortune was not permitted to be remedied, either by the fair exertion of those talents with which Providence had endowed him or by public gratitude. All these circumstances came lately under the eye and ear of the writer. They are samples of what is heard every day in the ill-read, or ill-considered remarks of such as have not taken the trouble to be better informed; and are only worthy of notice as coming occasionally from persons who assume a lead in conversation, and who would have felt not a little indignant at being told, what was nevertheless fact, that they were disseminating untruths or nonsense.

Another order of persons, of more influence and information, chiefly of the class of public writers, who have in view to exalt another great political name, that of Mr. Fox, think it necessary for this purpose to lower, though indirectly and circuitously, the reputation of Burke.

From these we hear of him frequently as a man of great genius, of many acquirements, of brilliant fancy, and amusing talents; keeping out of view, as if unknown, those more useful and profound qualities which constitute his chief claims to distinction. Sometimes again, he is what they are pleased

to term a philosophical politician, meaning by this to imply something different from a practical statesman. Sometimes he is even admitted to be the greatest writer of the age, while little allusion is made to that parliamentary eloquence which made his name as an orator more celebrated on the continent of Europe, while still a member of the House of Commons, than those of his great rivals, and which enabled him to take the lead many years in that assembly, added to receiving the then (1774) unusual honour of an invitation to represent, free of expense, one of the chief cities of the kingdom. Occasionally hints are dropped of how much better his genius would have been exerted in many other ways than in politics—what a brilliant career for instance, he would have run as Professor in a University—or similar sphere of exertion. Such opinions are merely idle. Fitted no doubt to excel in any thing to which a large, an acute, and vigorous mind was applied, we need not speculate on what he might have been, but render honour to the singular ability displayed in the station he actually filled. For that post nature and inclination had fitted him by an early bias toward the consideration of public affairs, large acquisitions of the necessary knowledge, and striking facility in giving utterance to the opinions formed; while there is little doubt that more of the strength of his mind was put forth by the contentions inseparable from politics than could have been effected by any other species of discussion. But if he has left behind in the track of life deliberately adopted, more materials for fame than either of his contemporaries or predecessors, namely the finest orations in the English language, the ablest political disquisitions, the introduction or support of a series of important constitutional measures for nearly thirty years together, and a reputation perhaps above any other for practical wisdom, not resting on opinion of the moment but on record in his speeches and writings;—surely it savours of trifling to say that he would have succeeded better in any other pursuit.

It is time that this species of warfare against his fame should cease. No man indeed intimately conversant with public affairs has been misled by it, as the debates in Parliament almost every night of every session testify; but it has served its turn pretty effectually among that multitude of persons who are less acquainted with such matters, and who

suspecting no sinister views, take for granted what is said without undergoing the labour of inquiring for themselves. Should the present attempt enable any of these to appreciate more justly the powers or character of one to whom this country is under deep obligations, the writer will not deem his labour misapplied. His testimony at least is impartial. He has no party purposes to answer; no influence to court; no interest to push; excepting that common interest felt by every generous mind, of rendering to a distinguished and virtuous character those honours which are its due.

List of the chief Writings of the Right Hon. EDMUND BURKE, arranged, as nearly as possible, in Chronological Order, and with Reference to the Volumes of his works (8vo. edit.) in which they may be found.

It may be necessary to observe, that the speeches, and notes of speeches, enumerated in the following catalogue, are such only as have a place in his works published by his executors. Four volumes of speeches, most of them not inserted in his Works, have been collected, and given to the world by a different Editor; and though necessarily imperfect, as being taken from casual and unauthorized reports when reporting was at a low ebb, they are probably the best that can now be procured.

The letters specified in this enumeration are all upon public affairs; some of them published soon after being written, some not; and the greater number forming pamphlets of considerable size.

The pieces marked thus (**) are likewise not included in his Works, though no doubt is entertained of their authenticity.

POETRY.

**Translation of an Idyllium of Theocritus about 1744.

**Several Scenes of a Play, on the Subject of

Alfred the Great ibid.

**Ballitore, a short Poem 1754.

| | In what Vol. contained. |
|---|----------------------------|
| **Lines on the River Blackwater | 1745. |
| **Translation of the concluding Portion of the 2nd Georgic of Virgil | 1746. |
| **Lines to John Damer, Esq. | 1747. |
| **The Reformer—Periodical Paper published in Dublin | 1748. |
| **Lines to Mr. Richard Shackleton, on his Marriage | 1748. |
| **And several shorter Pieces, still thought to be in existence. | |

MISCELLANEOUS.

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| Hints for an Essay on the Drama about | 1754. | x |
| Vindication of Natural Society | 1756. | 1 |
| Philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful | 1756. | 1 |
| **An Account of the European Settlements in America, 2 vols. 8vo. | 1757. | |
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| **Humorous Reply to the preceding, signed Whittington, a Tallow Chandler, of Cateaton- street; and Ship News for 1765—both be- lieved to be Mr. Burke's | 1766. | |
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| **Letter to Mr. Montague, on the Subject of the Impeachment of Mr. Hastings . April 1789. | |
| **Letters to M. Menonville, on the French Revolution Oct. 1789. | |

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xxviii LIST OF WRITINGS OF EDMUND BURKE.

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PORTRAITS OF BURKE.

Allusion has been made, (pages 345, 465), to portraits of Burke. Of these there are several in existence equally original, and of various shades of merit and resemblance.

Our first information on the subject is from himself. Writing to Barry in 1774, during the temporary misunderstanding alluded to in page 146 when engaged on his portrait, he says—"I have been painted in my life five times; twice in little and three times in large. The late Mr. Spencer, and the late Mr. Sifson* painted the miniatures. Mr. Worlidge and Sir Joshua painted the rest. * * A picture of me is now painting for Mr. Thrale by Sir Joshua."—Of the three in large thus mentioned, two are understood to be by Sir Joshua, one executed as I learn through Mr. Cotton, who possesses the President's papers, in 1766. That for Thrale was purchased by the late Mr. Richard Sharpe at Madame Piozzi's sale for 240 guineas, and is now in possession of Mrs. Drummond of Hyde Park Gardens. A fourth was painted by Sir Joshua in 1775, a present by him, it is said, to Mrs. Burke, by whom it was left to Earl Fitzwilliam, and now ornaments Wentworth House. A fifth from the pencil of the same artist, an undoubted original, is now at Drayton, as Sir Robert Peel informs me. Others, probably copies of more or less merit among which Mr. Haviland Burke has a good one, are said to exist in several quarters, upon which such as are like myself, not conversant with Art and the distinguishing touch of artists, hesitate to offer decided opinions. An interesting three-quarter length is at Lady Kerrison's, The Wick, Richmond Hill, bearing in the corner the words—"Edm. Burke, Esq. Æt. 43. JR. Fect." The history of the picture is unknown, but Lord Mahon, to whom I have to express my thanks for the trouble taken in several inquiries connected with this portion of my subject, says it was purchased with the house. Another I am informed is in possession of Archdeacon Burney, at Wickham Bishop.

The portrait finished by Barry, in 1774 for Dr. Brocklesby is now, or was recently, the property of Dr. Young, his

* For this gentleman he entertained more than common regard, and lived with him during early residence in London on very intimate terms.

nephew, formerly well known in the scientific world. He is likewise introduced by the same master in the fifth picture, "The Society," in the great room of the Society of Arts.

In 1775 the then Duke of Richmond requested him to sit to Romney "for a head." I am informed by the present Duke through the medium of a friend, that there is no such portrait at Goodwood, and therefore some accidental cause may have prevented its execution. A portrait, however, was painted by Romney, when or for whom is uncertain, of which I possess a good engraving. It is unlike those of Sir Joshua, the countenance of marked character, and conveys the impression of an older man than he was in 1775, if the Duke's order had been then really executed.

A portrait of him likewise exists at Knole, believed by Lord Amherst in a communication with which I have been favoured, to be the work of Opie. Bearing general resemblance to the others, the countenance is perhaps more severe, and it is obviously on personal examination by a different hand from any of the preceding.

The best engravings are by Watson, first published in 1770, and again in 1771, from the portrait by Sir Joshua in 1766,—by Hardy in 1780 from Thrale's picture,—by J. Jones in 1790 from Romney's picture ;—and by Benedetti in 1791 as previously mentioned, from the portrait by Sir Joshua painted in 1775. In addition to these I possess fourteen others in small; some are alleged to be "taken from life," when he was advanced in years; some bear so little resemblance as to give the idea of being merely fanciful; and several of the number were executed for periodical works. The bust by Hickey, and a group by Sir R. K. Porter, have been likewise engraved.

CHAPTER I.

Family and Birth of Mr. Burke—The Nagles—Castletown Roche Schoolmaster—Ballitore—Anecdotes—Studies, and Political Exercises at College—Poetry—Literary Society in Dublin—First Political Writings—Entry at the Middle Temple.

EDMUND BURKE, the most distinguished statesman perhaps of an age fertile in extraordinary men, and in genius and acquirements the greatest whom Ireland has produced, was descended from a respectable family long settled in the county of Galway.* Thence it removed to the county of Limerick, and once, according to some accounts, had possession of a small estate there, which became forfeited during one of those civil convulsions that have so often caused property to exchange possessors in that country. This took place some time in the troubled period between 1641 and 1653.

The Burkes, or Bourkes, now thickly strewn over the whole of Ireland particularly the southern part of it, were not an aboriginal, or, as then termed, a *mere Irish* family: but descended from the Norman Burghs, or De Burghs, (of which Burke is a corruption,) who went thither as adventurers under Strongbow, in the reign of Henry II. and took root in this promising soil.

An ancestor of Mr. Burke is said to have been Mayor of Limerick in 1646, when occupied by a native military force, which seeming disinclined to receive either the parliamentary army, or that under the Marquis of Ormond who aimed at securing it for Charles I. in whose interest the Irish army professed to be, the Mayor exerted himself vigorously in favour of the royal cause. A popular riot ensued, instigated by the intrigues of the Papal Nuncio, who, though professing devotion to the same cause, had

* The late Earl of Clanricarde, John Smyth de Burgh, (a Galway family) frequently addressed Mr. Burke as "Cousin."

some other ambitious purposes to answer; and Burke was not only roughly handled, but lost much of his property, was deposed from his office and imprisoned, his place being filled by a monk, who led on the rioters.

The great-grandfather of Edmund, possessing some property in the county of Cork, retired thither, and subsequently settled near the village of Castletown Roche. This spot stands about four or five miles from Donneraile, five or six from Mallow, and nearly about the same distance from the ruined old castle of Kilcolman, the residence, for a considerable time, of the poet Spenser, where he wrote the whole or the greater part of the "Fairy Queen." This property continuing in or being repurchased by the Burke family, came into the possession of Edmund in 1765 on the death of his elder brother Garret, who died on the 27th April in that year, and lies buried on the spot. It was sold by him in 1792 or 1793 for something less than £4000. The annual value at that period was under £300, but of late it has produced above £700 per annum.

His father Richard Burke, or Bourke,* as it was often indiscriminately spelt, was a Protestant, and educated for an attorney. Removing from Limerick to Dublin he took a house in Bachelor's Walk, then on Arran Quay, afterwards on Ormond Quay, and soon obtaining extensive practice, continued for several years in the first rank of his profession in that city. At an early period, he had become attached to a juvenile acquaintance, a Miss Nagle, of the respectable family of that name still existing near Castletown Roche, and descended from the Attorney General to James II. To this lady he was married, at Mallow, about the year 1725 or 1726, and by her became the father of fourteen or fifteen children, all of whom died young, excepting Garret, Edmund, Richard, and a daughter named Juliana, baptized in 1728.† She married Mr. French, a gentleman

* Many families still use the latter orthography, particularly that of the Earls of Mayo, the founder of which, also a Richard Bourke and LL.D. died in 1727.

† The following is a copy of the Church Register, Castletown Roche Parish, diocese of Cloyne:—

"Juliana, daughter of Richard and Mary Burke, baptized 1728.—God-father Edw. Fitton.—God-mothers Mary Dunworth, Mary Nayler."

of respectability in the county of Galway, and possessed no ordinary talents. In the words of a gentleman (a member of the Irish Bar), who knew her long and intimately, to the writer, "Mrs. French, had nature destined her for the other sex, would have been as great an orator as her brother Edmund. In her conversation there was so much of elegance as well as of ability, that I often remarked it would have been difficult to transpose a word to advantage." Educated in the faith of her mother, as is commonly the case with girls in Ireland where the parents are of different religious persuasions, she was a rigid Roman Catholic, exemplary in her duties, and kind and charitable to her poorer neighbours. On Christmas Day, in every year, she was accustomed to invite the halt, maimed, blind, and distressed of every description in the vicinity to a plentiful repast, at which she waited on them herself.

Garret, who followed his father's profession and was well known in Dublin as a man of wit and drollery, died unmarried. Richard, who became equally distinguished in London as a wit, a politician, a writer, and a lawyer, in which latter capacity Lord Mansfield had formed and expressed to several members of the bar, the highest opinion of him, and of whom some notices will hereafter occur, likewise died unmarried. The issue of Mrs. French alone survive in the children of the late Thomas Haviland Burke, who are therefore sole representatives of the family.* With the descendants of the late Mr. John Nugent, Mrs. Burke's brother, a remote relationship to Mr. Burke by blood, as stated by that family, also exists; he having married Miss Lucy Nagle, daughter of Mr. Garret Nagle, of Moneamyny and Ballyduff, in Cork, first cousin on both father and mother's side to Edmund Burke. It is worthy of remark, that Sylvanus Spenser, elder son of the poet, married Ellen Nagle, elder daughter of Mr. David Nagle, ancestor of the gentleman just mentioned, and great aunt to Edmund Burke's mother. Marriage therefore remotely connected these two celebrated names.

* A strange story is told in Galt's *Life of West*, of the painter meeting with a monk named Burke, bearing some resemblance to Edmund. This, if true, could be only accidental. None of the family or its earliest connections knew any other than the three brothers.

For his maternal relations, among whom many of his juvenile days were spent, Edmund always preserved a warm regard; and as several were devoted to various departments of the public service, advanced their interests as opportunity permitted. Among these was the late Admiral, Sir Edmund Nagle; who spending much of his time at Beaconsfield in the intervals of sea-duty, amused his celebrated kinsman with naval anecdotes and affairs, in which the latter took so much interest, as to have acquired a large stock of nautical terms, often applied with great effect in his speeches and writings; while in return the young sailor received warm applause for several instances of gallant conduct. One of these Mr. Burke dwelt upon with peculiar delight to his friends; remarking that in ancient Rome it would have obtained a laurel crown for the courage displayed. A person, it seems, had accidentally fallen overboard from a ship at sea in which Mr. Nagle was embarked, who finding he was in danger from a shark, which had just before been seen near the ship, immediately sprung into the water to rescue him, and happily succeeded. This circumstance being much talked of at the time, the King (George III) heard of it, and Mr. Nagle being pointed out to him, he entered into conversation, paying many compliments to his gallantry. "It was a hazardous attempt, Captain Nagle," observed the King. "I never thought of the hazard, please your Majesty." "But do you think you would run such a risk again, Captain Nagle?" "Please your Majesty, I would go to h—ll at any time to serve a friend," replied the plain-spoken seaman.

Edmund Burke was born in the house on Arran Quay, January 1, O. S. 1730. Some have thought it to be 1728, from the entry in Trinity College Matriculation book; but as the former was stated by his family, and the age sixty-eight is noted on the tablet to his memory, we have perhaps no right to disturb his own or their belief. Those who are fond of tracing coincidences will not fail to remark, that, like his great contemporaries Mr. Fox and Mr. Pitt, he was a second son. It has likewise been generally believed that he inherited only a younger son's patrimony, and that in London previous to his entrance into Parliament, he was wholly dependent on his pen for the means of support. Such

was not quite the case. The integrity and reputation of his father enabled him, after living in affluence, and educating his children in a suitable manner, to leave them at his death a considerable provision. Burke himself, whose statement I have seen, writing in 1766, thus says to Mr. Shackleton, "The fact is, that my father never did practise in the country, but always in the superior courts: that he was for many years not only in the first *rank*, but the very first man of his profession in point of practice and credit; until by giving way to splenetic humours, he did in a manner voluntarily contract his practice; and yet after some heavy losses by the banks, and living creditably for near forty years (one time pretty expensively), laying out something on Dick's establishment and on my education in the Temple (a thousand pounds or thereabout for me), he died worth very near six thousand pounds. This I mention, as poverty is the greatest imputation (very unjustly I think) that is ever laid on that profession."

Very little is known of his early years, except his being of a delicate constitution, tending, as was believed, to consumption. The most troublesome symptom of the complaint was a pain in the side, which disabled him from taking the same degree of boyish exercise as his brothers. When they therefore were at play, he was commonly seen reclining at ease perusing a book. To this Richard Burke alluded, when being found in a reverie shortly after an extraordinary display of powers in the House of Commons by his brother, and questioned by Malone as to the cause—"I have been wondering," said he, "how Ned has contrived to monopolize all the talents of the family; but then again, I remember *when we were at play he was always at work.*"

His delicate state of health rendering necessary a longer stay than is customary under the paternal roof, he was first taught to read by his mother, a woman of cultivated understanding. An elderly lady in the neighbourhood is likewise said to have lent aid in imparting instruction to this great master of the powers of the English language; but this is not unusual. Women are the first instructors of us all. For his mother he ever entertained strong affection—and what man of genius or feeling does not? In a juvenile letter (1746) he thus writes of her illness:—"In all my life I

never felt so heavy a grief: nor really did I well know what it was before. You may well believe this when I tell you that for three days together we expected her death every moment."

The air of the country, however, being deemed essential to give vigour to his frame, he was removed from the metropolis to the house of his grandfather at Castletown Roche. Here for the first time he was put to school; and the ruins of the school-room, or what is said to have been such, may be still traditionally pointed out to those who take an interest in prying into those early haunts which the subsequent development of great genius serves to elevate into celebrity. His progress in knowledge, however, was not very considerable, his relatives, from motives of kindness, directing attention more to what was likely to improve his health than to inform his mind. Still he was not idle. The village schoolmaster, whose name was O'Halloran, and who lived to an advanced age, was known to one or two of the older inhabitants living there many years ago, who remembered him in their youth as boasting upon all occasions that he was the first who had put a Latin grammar into the hands of Edmund Burke.

Another of this old man's stories, of the truth of which, from the known benevolence of heart of the pupil, as well as from the circumstantiality with which it was told by the master, there was no reason to doubt, related to the time of Edmund going thither to look after his property in 1766. Divested of the circumlocution common to the lower classes in Ireland, it was in substance this:—Hearing that his boy, as he called him, who had got into parliament, was come to look at the place, he thought he would just step up to the house to see whether he would remember his poor master. Doubtful of the reception he should meet from a great man, he recognized him dressing in a room over the door of the house (long since in ruins), and the boy as quickly remembered his old master's face. Running quickly down stairs, his shirt collar open, his beard half shaven, he seized him eagerly by both hands, "asked all about me, and about the little boys his school-fellows, and said you must stay all day with me, O'Halloran, and gossip about old times;—and sure enough I did;—but was this all do you suppose?

No, to be sure it was not;—didn't he put five golden guineas into my hand as I was coming away?"

The gentleman to whom this anecdote was related,* in the course of other inquiries in the neighbourhood, asked a cottager, in order to try if the name was familiar among this class of people, whether he knew anything of a noted man called Burke who once lived in that quarter? "To be sure I do," was the reply, "Hasn't every body heard of Edmund Burke?"

At Castletown Roche he spent a considerable time, so much it is believed as five years; and the partiality which he always entertained for the spot in talking of it in his domestic circle, added to his long residence, and familiarity with the neighbouring objects, particularly Spenser's ruined castle, gave rise to the belief among many intimate friends of his having been born there. It was countenanced also by a poem which he wrote at college on the river Blackwater, running to Youghall Bay, through the counties of Cork and Waterford, near to the spot where he resided, and into which falls the *Molla* or *Mulla*, a stream immortalized by the author of the *Fairy Queen*. Several other places in Ireland have equally, though incorrectly, contended for the honour of his birth, such as Athlone; Limerick; Thurles in the county of Tipperary; the county of Carlow adjoining to Kildare; and the vicinity of Lismore. Rumours of this description arise from that unhappy neglect which Ireland too often exhibits towards her eminent men; and in part to Mr. Burke himself, who never willingly obtruded his name into the magazines or newspapers of the day.

From Castletown Roche he was removed to Dublin, and is said to have continued about a year at school in Smithfield in that city, kept by a Mr. James Fitzgerald, when the reputation of the classical academy at Ballitore, and the improvement of his health, further impaired by rapid growth, induced his father to send him thither.

This village lies in the county of Kildare, twenty-eight miles to the southward of Dublin, in a valley through which runs the small river Gricse. The site was purchased early in the last century by two of the Society of Friends, John

• From Mr. Haviland Burke.

Barcroft and Amos Strettel, as a species of colony for its members. A school of a superior class being required among this intelligent community, an honest and learned Quaker, Abraham Shackleton, was invited from Yorkshire, in 1726, to conduct it, whose capacity and diligence soon spread the reputation of the establishment over much of the southern and eastern parts of Ireland, by turning out from it several eminent men. It was continued by his son Richard Shackleton; by his grandson Abraham, who died in 1818; both men of superior original minds, and some poetical powers; and still exists with undiminished reputation under members of the same family. To this school Edmund, then in his twelfth year, along with his brothers Garret and Richard, was removed the 26th May, 1741. It has been observed by Dr. Johnson, that the early years of distinguished men, when minutely traced, furnish evidence of the same vigour or originality of mind by which they are celebrated in after-life. Such was certainly the case with young Burke.

His habits, as Shackleton said, indicated more of solidity than commonly belongs to that period of life. His powers appeared not so much in brilliancy, as in steadiness of application, facility of comprehension, and strength of memory; indications which drew the commendation first, and, as his powers unfolded themselves, soon the warm regard of his master, under whose paternal care, the improvement of his health kept pace with that of his mind. The grateful pupil never forgot his obligations.

Among his schoolfellows were Dr. Brocklesby, the physician, afterwards so well known in the literary circles of London; the Rev. Michael Kearney, brother to one of the Bishops of Ossory, a modest and ingenious man, of great literary acquirements, who died in 1814 at an advanced age; Thomas Bushe, father of the Irish Judge of that name. Among others of equal talents, though filling inferior stations in life, was a Mr. Matthew Smith, a country schoolmaster, who possessed his esteem, and with whom he corresponded. Another, a Mr. Zouch, who was still less fortunate in life, he kept for some years domesticated in his establishment at Beaconsfield, partly as amanuensis, partly as steward, and whom he tried repeatedly to push forward in the world. Dr. Sleight, an eminent physician of Cork, the friend of

Goldsmith in more than one season of adversity, and the first friend of Barry, the painter, did not come to the school till Burke had quitted it; but they met in London afterwards, and became intimately acquainted, the latter frequently saying, "he knew few more ingenious and valuable men."

But his chief favourite and friend was Richard Shackleton, the only son of his master and his successor in the school, with whom a lively epistolary correspondence was kept up during the remainder of his life, to which I have had access. Much of its earlier portion applies to their studies and literary pursuits, and confers credit on both. Burke when advanced in fame, paid him visits in his journeys to Ireland. Shackleton when he came to England, ever found the most cordial and affectionate attention from the now distinguished statesman, and could seldom remain long enough for the gratification of his friend. No attachment could be stronger or more honourable to both; and the politician confessed to tears on the receipt of intelligence of his death. This gentleman, being often questioned during his life as to the boyish peculiarities of the great Burke, seemed to feel much interest in recounting them. The following is an extract from his written account; and being three or four years older was fully competent to form an opinion.

"Edmund was a lad of most promising genius; of an inquisitive and speculative cast of mind. This was improved in him by a constitutional indisposition that prevented him from suffering by those secessions from study which are the consequence of puerile diversions. He read much while a boy, and accumulated a stock of learning of great variety. His memory was extensive; his judgment early ripe. He would find in his own mind in reasoning and communing with himself such a fund of entertainment that he seemed not at all to regret his hours of solitude. Yet he was affable, free, and communicative, as ready to teach as to learn. He made the reading of the classics his diversion rather than his business. He was particularly delighted with history and poetry, and while at school performed several exercises in the latter with a manly grace." A very favourite study, as he once confessed in the House of Commons, was the old romances, *Palmerin of England* and

Don Belianis of Greece, upon which he had wasted much valuable time.

It is recorded of him while at school, that seeing a poor man pulling down his own hut near the village, and hearing that it was done by order of the parish conservator of the roads upon the plea of being too near the high-way, the young philanthropist exclaimed, that were he a man, and possessed of authority, the poor should not thus be oppressed. Little things in children often tend to indicate, as well as to form, the mind of the future man. There was no characteristic of his subsequent life more marked, than a hatred of oppression in any form, or from any quarter.

The steward of the establishment at Ballitore, who sometimes became director of the school-boy sports, used to repeat this and similar anecdotes with no little pride of his acquaintance when he had risen into celebrity. He delighted in hearing of his celebrity; and when the newspapers had any thing of more than usual interest to communicate, he was quite insensible to all other claims upon attention. He was a shrewd North-of-Ireland presbyterian, named Gill, upon whom young Shackleton wrote verses, and young Burke exercised his boyish logic in learned argument; the keen, though unlettered remarks in reply to which, gave him in their opinion some claim to the more philosophical appellation of Hobbes. By this name Mr. Burke used to inquire after him.

The last visit he made to Ballitore, took place in 1786, after the opening of the impeachment of Hastings. The old steward, who regarded this measure as another illustration of the humane spirit displayed by the boy, was then verging on his eightieth year, his eyes dim, his limbs feeble, and, as it proved shortly afterwards, tottering into the grave. The announcement of the name of his youthful associate inspired him with momentary vigour. Mr. Burke accosted him with his accustomed kindness, shook him often and cordially by the hand, and introduced his son, who displayed equal attention to his father's humble but venerable friend. This condescension so much affected his feelings, that for some time he was deprived of utterance; he bowed repeatedly, and at length brought out, that he was proud—very proud to see him—adding, “you have many friends in Ireland,

sir." "I am happy, Mr. Gill, that you are one of them.—You look very well.—Am I much changed since you last saw me?" Old William replied, after some attempt at examination, it being then evening, that he was almost too *dark* with age to observe; when Mr. Burke, with characteristic affability, took a candle and held it up to his own face, to give the aged servant a better view of it; a scene which the relator of the anecdote says, those who were present cannot easily forget.*

A spirit of emulation with his friend Skackleton, and natural taste together, made young Burke towards the close of his school career, if not a poet at least poetical. In a spirit of friendly rivalry they each translated the thirteenth Idyllium of Theocritus on the death of Adonis, reported to have possessed considerable merit. Some scenes of a play on the story of King Alfred, are also attributed to him about the same time, which were lost or destroyed while on a visit to a relation residing at Ballyduff, in Tipperary.

At Ballitore also he is believed to have imbibed other and more distinguished characteristics; particularly that regard for civil and religious liberty which marked his future life. He had observed among the society of *Friends*, in which he was domesticated, that differences of opinion on those points made neither worse subjects nor worse men. Reflection, and the remembrance that relatives on the side of one parent were Roman Catholics, probably taught him to extend the same liberality of sentiment towards persons of that persuasion, then in a depressed state. His opinions on this point are known to have been formed soon. The fact exhibits an additional proof of early maturity of mind, in possessing the power to disengage itself from those prejudices and animosities existing in Ireland between Protestant and Romanist, at a time when even among near connections, they produced an unchristian, and even hostile spirit.

To this he alluded in a debate after the riots in London (June 20, 1780), on a proposal that no Papist should be permitted to educate a Protestant; and on this occasion spoke in high terms of his preceptor. "He had been educated (he said) as a Protestant of the Church of England by a dissenter who was an honour to his sect, though that

* Poems by Mary Leadbeater (late Shackleton), 1808.—Cottage Biography, 1822, by the same.

sect was considered one of the purest. Under his eye he had read the Bible, morning, noon, and night, and had ever since been the happier and better man for such reading."

Towards the middle of April, 1744, having been just three years at school, he quitted it, possessed of what Mr. Shackleton used to describe as "a large and miscellaneous stock of learning for his years." Next day he entered his name in Trinity college, as pensioner. The following notice appears in the register: premising that there is a mistake as already mentioned, in his age. The academical year beginning in July, the year is really 1744, though nominally noted a year sooner; his name also is spelt according to the orthography of the other branches of the family.

1743.

| | | | | | | |
|--------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|---|------------------------|
| April 14. | Edmund, Bourke Pens. | Fil. Ric. Gene- ros. | Annum Agens 16. | Natus. Dublin. | Educatus Sub. ferula Mag. Shackleton. | Dr. Pelis- sier. |
|--------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|---|------------------------|

Dr. Pelissier, the tutor, is represented by high college authority as a man of ordinary acquirements, who when viceprovost in 1753, quitted the university for the valuable living of Ardstraw, in the north of Ireland. The pupil describes him in his first letter to Shackleton, as "an exceedingly good humoured, *cleanly*, civil fellow, one of the most learned in the university, who told me (what I would not say, except to a particular friend) that I was a good scholar—understood the authors very well, and seemed to take pleasure in them, (yet by-the-bye, I don't know how he could tell that) and that I was more fit for the college than three parts of my class." In a month the tutor gave him for study, "the nine first chapters of Burgersdicius, six last *Æneids*, *Enchiridion*, *Tabula Cebetis*, which my tutor recommends as a fine picture of human life." And in ten days more writes to the same correspondent: "Sitting at my own bureau with, oh hideous Burgersdicius! on one hand, and your two letters on the other." Goldsmith, I have elsewhere stated, equally complained of the repulsive Burgersdicius.*

Like other men subsequently distinguished for eminence in life, he was once supposed to have made no figure at the

* Life of Goldsmith, vol. 1, p. 69, 8vo. 1837.

university. This is incorrect. He may not have obtained material distinction in a few of those studies, which were specially honoured there at the time. But of his devotion to the great work of acquiring knowledge and of using it, whether in discussion among his fellow students, in original writing, in criticism and in inviting criticism from others, or in the composition of long and clever letters stating his opinions, I have seen incontestable proofs. His intellectual activity at this period was in fact remarkable. He could write of nothing else. Study, and the fruits of study, were his only themes. All the hours withdrawn from these were considered nearly lost; the cultivation of mind was with him not merely a duty, but an overpowering passion, which swallowed up every other. Even in this juvenile season, he regretted the usual hours given to juvenile amusements, and in October, 1744, thus writes:—

“What would I not give to have my spirits a little more settled. I am too giddy. This is the bane of my life: it hurries me from my studies, and I am afraid will hinder me from knowing anything thoroughly. I have a superficial knowledge of many things, but scarce the bottom of any; so that I have no manner of right to the preference you give me in the first.” In allusion to town life, he says, in November—“I am in the enemy’s country; the townsman is beset on every side; it is here difficult to sit down and think seriously. Oh, how happy are you that live in the country. I assure you, my friend, that without the superior grace of God, I will find it very difficult to be even commonly virtuous.” Such feelings are well supported by the following passage—the germ of some subsequent brilliant thoughts—on “the beauty of the Heavens. I call them beauties; for beauty consists in variety and uniformity, and is not that abundantly shewn in the motion and form of the heavenly bodies? What grander idea can the mind of man form to itself than a prodigious, glorious, and fiery globe, hanging in the midst of an infinite space, and surrounded with bodies of whom our earth is scarcely anything in the comparison!”

That he was not negligent of essential collegiate studies, is proved by his election to a Scholarship, 26th May, 1746. This is a great point of ambition among students, but for

several days he remained in doubt whether he should accept it. "You may be curious to know," he writes, "what ^{are} the advantages of our scholarship. We have our comm^{ons} for nothing; fifty shillings a year in the cellar; are memb^{ers} and freemen of the university, and have a vote for a Member of Parliament; the ground rent of our chambers; our decrements between three and four pounds per annum, forgiven; and when we take our degree, have a good chance for fifteen pounds per annum more. * * * We were exercised for two days in all the Greek and Roman authors of note. Dr. Forster, who examined me in Catiline's speech in Sallust, seemed very well pleased at my answering, and asked from whose school I came, a question I did not hear asked besides." I have seen one of his prize volumes for proficiency in classics, given in 1745. In tracking him through the College books, I find him occasionally receiving the "thanks of the House," for good attendance at lecture; and often fined for small negligences, arising no doubt from not living in College, but under the paternal roof.

His favourite studies, "while spending three hours every day in the public library," as he writes at this time, were classics, history, philosophy, general literature, and from a speculative turn of mind, a pretty strong attachment to metaphysics; at least so far as they go toward clearing the judgment and strengthening the understanding, but no further. This pursuit he afterwards relinquished, convinced, as he said, that it was of doubtful utility, tending neither to make men better nor happier, but rather the reverse. His opinions, both of many of our own and of the ancient writers, were formed at an early period; admiring more especially those which imparted the greatest knowledge of human nature, of the springs of human motives and human actions, and an acquaintance with human manners. On this principle he was accustomed not only to observe, "that a good novel was a good book," but frequently to amuse the social fire-place, particularly in female society, by perusing a few of the more celebrated.

Bacon's essays formed a favourite study, and he always characterized them as the greatest works of that great man. Shakspeare, Addison, Le Sage, Fielding, and Smollett, then a new writer, were his companions in intervals from graver

studies. Richardson, contrary to the opinion of Johnson, he thought much inferior to Fielding as a describer of human nature. Demosthenes was his favourite orator. Plutarch's writings he professed, in a letter to a friend at this time, to admire beyond those of any other. He preferred Euripides to Sophocles among the dramatists; and the Greek historians, and Xenophon especially, to the Latin. Of Horace, Lucretius, and Virgil, he was particularly fond; maintaining the superiority of the *Æneid* as a poem over the *Iliad*, while he admitted the general excellence of Homer's genius in invention, force, and sublimity, over that of Virgil. All his letters prove that History and Poetry, as with most men of genius at the same time of life, were his favourite studies—one to inform and strengthen the mind, the other to elevate and refine it. Few indeed but in subsequent years have acknowledged their obligations to such instructors; and of Dublin he says at this time—"Poetry and history are the chief branches which are taught."

Among the students were a few intimates selected for their literary tastes, named Dennis, Brennan, Buck, Hamilton, Mohun, and two or three more. A large correspondence, now in my possession, was kept up between them and Shackleton on their favourite topics, indicative of the strongest attachment to Burke, and, though clever themselves, respect for his superior attainments, expressed with all the familiarity and jocose spirit of youth. One of their modes of improvement was the institution of a private debating club. Here their ingenuity was exercised on historical and poetical subjects chiefly, the records of which I have seen; and as specimens of their proceedings, the following to Shackleton is from the pen of Burke. Dennis however formed the principal depository of this correspondence.

"May 28, 1747.

"Scene 1.—Burke, Dennis—The Club-room—Dennis goes away about some business—Manet Burke solus.

"As the Committee appointed for the trial of Dennis has just now broke up without doing any thing, for want of sufficient members, I have time enough on my hands to write what you desire—an account of the proceedings of our society since your departure; in which you have been

a perfect prophet, for Mohun was expelled last lustrum by the censor, Mr. Dennis. After an examination of his conduct from the first foundation of the society, it was found exceeding bad, without one virtue to redeem it, for which he suffered the above sentence. He was tried some time before (Burke, Pres.) for his bad behaviour, but behaved still worse at trial, which brought fresh punishments on him, and at length expulsion. This is not the only revolution in our Club. Mr. Buck's conduct much altered for the worse. We seldom see him, for which he has not been spared. Dennis, Hamilton, and your humble—ha! ha! attend constantly. Cardegri,* as we expected, middling. You all this while are uneasy to know the cause of Dennis's accusation. It is no less than an attempt to overturn this society by an insolent behaviour to the President and Society. I am the accuser, and when you know this you will tremble for him. I must congratulate you likewise on the censor's minor thanks which you received with a declaration that had you entered earlier into the society you had been entitled to the grand thanks. The censor gave himself the grand thanks, and the same to me.

"We had during your absence the following debates very well handled. On the Stadtholder—Burke, an oration; Lenity to the Rebels, a debate: Dennis for, Burke against. Prince of Orange to harangue his troops—Dennis. The sailors in a ship turning pirates—Dennis for, Burke and Hamilton against. Catiline to the Allobroges—Dennis. General Huske for engaging at Falkirk—Burke; Hawley against Dennis. Brutus the first to the Romans—Burke. Hamilton is now President, and a very good one. You use me oddly in your letter; you accuse me of laziness and what not (though I am likely to fill this sheet). I did not expect this from your friendship that you should think I would in your absence refuse you my company for a few lines when I attended you in town for many a mile. You behave to me just after the manner that a vile prologue I've read desires the audience to use the actors—'But if you damn, be it discreetly done; flatter us here and damn us when you're gone.' You see I have not lost my faculty of

* Each of the members had fanciful names assigned them.

quoting Grub Street. Just so, when here you blarney me ; in the country you abuse me ; but that shall not hinder me from writing on, for (to shew you my Latin) *tenet insanabile multos scribendi cacochæthes*. Come we now to Shar (one of their juvenile pieces) ; the beginning is dark indeed, but not quite void of connection, ‘for whose good effects,’ &c. connects with the first line ; all the rest is properly between parentheses. Phaeton sells well still (another of their pieces) ; tell me exactly what is said of his appearance in the country. Miss Cotter is quite charmed with your writings, and more of them would not be disagreeable to that party. I have myself almost finished a piece—an odd one—but you shall not see it till it comes out, if ever. Write the rest, Pantagruel, for I can stay no longer—past nine. I am now returned and no Pantagruel. Your oration on Poverty is, I think, very good, and has in some parts very handsome touches : you shall have the Club’s opinion next time, which was deferred till we should have a full house. I received your novel and will read it (and peruse it—?) carefully.”

An extract from the records of the “Club” is likewise given in the Rev. Mr. Todd’s life of Milton.

“Burke, I may observe,” says that gentleman, “was an ardent admirer of Milton. I learn from Mr. Walker (of Dublin) that this great orator was a distinguished member of a literary club instituted in Dublin in 1747, in which he sometimes held the Secretary’s pen, and sometimes filled the President’s chair ; and that in the original minutes of this society, his early Miltonic taste is thus recorded—

“Friday, June 5, 1747, Mr. Burke being ordered to speak the speech of Moloch, *receives applause for the delivery, it being in character*. Then the speech was read and criticised upon ; its many beauties illustrated ; the chief judged to be its conformity with the character of Moloch—

No let us rather choose,
Arm’d with hell-flames and fury, all at once,
O’er Heav’n’s high towers to force resistless way.

The words ‘all at once’ (the metre not considered) seemed to the whole assembly to hurt the sentence by stopping the rapidity and checking the fierceness of it, making it too long

and tedious. Then was Belial's speech read to the great delight of the hearers; whose opinion was, that Homer only can be compared to Milton, not only for the beauties that shine in every verse, but likewise for the just and lively colours in which each character was drawn; for that none but Homer, like him, ever supported such spirit and exactness in the speeches of such a contrast and variety of persons."—These notices, adds the learned writer, "will not seem tedious; for they suggest an opinion that the finest oratory of modern times might owe its origin and perfection to the poetry of Milton."

From the admiration to the writing of poetry is a common result. He had indeed transgressed in that way previously. Of the degree of proficiency attained, we have an example in the translation of part of the second Georgic of Virgil, the panegyric on a country life, made in 1746, which as the work of a youth, may take a fair place in the rank and file of College verses.

Oh! happy swains! did they know how to prize
 The many blessings rural life supplies;
 Where in safe huts from clattering arms afar,
 The pomp of cities and the din of war,
 Indulgent earth, to pay his labouring hand,
 Pours in his arms the blessings of the land;
 Calm through the valleys flows along his life,
 He knows no danger, as he knows no strife.
 What! though no marble portals, rooms of state,
 Vomit the cringing torrent from his gate
 Though no proud purple hang his stately halls,
 Nor lives the breathing brass along his walls,
 Though the sheep clothe him without colours' aid,
 Nor seeks he foreign luxury from trade,
 Yet peace and honesty adorn his days
 With rural riches and a life of ease.

Joyous the yell-wing fields here Ceres sees,
 Here blushing clusters bend the groaning trees,
 Here spreads the silver lake, and all around
 Perpetual green, and flow'rs adorn the ground.

How happy too, the peaceful rustic lies,
 The grass his bed, his canopy the skies;
 From heat retiring to the noon-tide glade,
 His trees protect him with an ample shade;
 No jarring sounds invade his settling breast,
 His lowing cows shall lull him into rest.
 Here 'mong the caves, the woods, and rocks around,
 Here, only here, the hardy youth abound;

Religion here has fixed her pure abodes,
 Parents are honoured, and adored the gods;
 Departing justice, when she fled mankind,
 In these blest plains her footsteps left behind.

Celestial Nine! my only joy and care,
 Whose love inflames me, and whose rites I bear,
 Lead me, oh lead me! from the vulgar throng,
 Clothe nature's myst'ries in thy rapturous song;
 What various forms in heav'n's broad belt appear,
 Whose limits bound the circle of the year,
 Or spread around in glitt'ring order lie,
 Or roll in mystic numbers through the sky?
 What dims the midnight lustre of the moon?
 What cause obstructs the sun's bright rays at noon?
 Why haste his fiery steeds so long to lave
 Their splendid chariot in the wintry wave?
 Or why bring on the lazy moon so slow?
 What love detains them in the realms below?

But if this dull, this feeble breast of mine,
 Can't reach such heights, or hold such truths divine,
 Oh! may I seek the rural shades alone,
 Of half mankind unknowing and unknown,
 Range by the borders of the silver flood,
 And waste a life ingloriously good.

Hail! blooming fields, where joy unclouded reigns,
 Where silver Sperchius laves the yell-wing plains.
 Oh! where, Taygeta, shall I hear around
 Lyæus praise the Spartan virgins' sound?
 What god will bear me from this burning heat,
 In Hæmus' valley, to some cool retreat,
 Where oaks and laurels guard the sacred ground,
 And with their ample foliage shade me round?

Happy the man, who versed in Nature's laws,
 From known effects can trace the hidden cause!
 Him not the terrors of the vulgar fright
 The vagrant forms and terrors of the night;
 Black and relentless fate he tramples on,
 And all the rout of greedy Acheron.
 Happy whose life the rural god approves,
 The guardian of his growing flocks and groves;
 Harmonious Pan and old Sylvanus join
 The sister nymphs, to make his joys divine:
 Him not the splendours of a crown can please,
 Or consul's honours bribe to quit his ease.
 Though on his will should crowding armies wait,
 And suppliant kings come suing to his gate;
 No piteous objects here his peace molest,
 Nor can he sorrow while another's blest;
 His food alone what bounteous nature yields,
 From bending orchards and luxuriant fields,

Pleased he accepts, nor seeks the mad resort
Of thronging clients and litigious court.

Let one delight all danger's forms to brave,
Rush on the sword, or plunge amid the wave.
Destroy all nations with an easy mind,
And make a general havoc of his kind,
That on a Tyrian couch he may recline,
And from a costlier goblet quaff his wine ;
Another soul is buried with his store,
Hourly he heaps, and hourly longs for more ;
Some in the rastrum fix their sole delight,
Some in the applauses of a rich third night ;
While gain smiles lovely in another's eyes,
Though brother's blood should buy the horrid prize
Though from his country guilt should make him run
Where other nations feel another sun.

The happy rustic turns the fruitful soil,
And hence proceeds the year's revolving toil ;
On this his country for support depends,
On this his cattle, family, and friends :
For this the bounteous gods reward his care,
With all the product of the various year ;
His youngling flocks now whiten all the plain,
Now sink the furrows with the teeming grain ;
Beauteous to these Pomona adds her charms,
And pours her fragrant treasures in his arms,
From laden boughs, the orchard's rich produce,
The mellow apple, and the generous juice.

Now winter's frozen hand benumbs the plam,
The winter too has blessings for the swain :
His grunting herd is fed without his toil,
His groaning presses overflow with oil ;
The languid autumn crown'd with yellow leaves,
With bleeding fruit and golden-bearded sheaves,
Her various products scatters o'er the land,
And rears the horn of Plenty in her hand.

Nor less than these, wait his domestic life,
His darling children, and his virtuous wife,
The day's long absence they together mourn,
Hang on his neck, and welcome his return ;
The cows, departing from the joyful field,
Before his door their milky tribute yield,
While on the green, the frisky kids engage,
With adverse horns and counterfeited rage.
He too, when marked with white the festal day,
Devotes his hours to rural sport and play ;
Stretch'd on the green amid the jovial quire
Of boon companions that surround the fire,
With front enlarged he crowns the flowing bowl,
And calls thee, Bacchus, to inspire his soul ;

Now warm'd with wine, to vigorous sports they rise ;
 High on an elm is hung the victor's prize ;
 To him 'tis given, whose force with greatest speed
 Can wing the dart, or urge the fiery steed.

Such manners made the ancient Sabines bold,
 Such the life led by Romulus of old ;
 By arts like these divine Etruria grows,
 From such foundations mighty Rome arose,
 Whose godlike fame the world's vast circuit fills,
 Who with one wall hath circled seven vast hills ;
 Such was, ere Jove began his iron reign,
 Ere mankind feasted upon oxen slain,
 The life that Saturn and his subjects led,
 Ere from the land offended justice fled ;
 As yet the brazen use of arms unknown,
 And anvils rung with scythes and shares alone.

From the correspondence of the young friends they appear to have taken much interest in theatrical as well as literary topics, and allusions occur to certain contributions to the press. One of the latter was an occasional paper, "The Reformer." Dennis, writing in January, 1748, to Shackleton, mentions his having sent one, and asks, "What is your opinion of it? Who do you think the author?" Again, "Ned (Burke) is busy about the next Reformer, or he would write to you." Burke says himself, writing in May, "Your father mentioned to me the Reformer, and said it had not, he believed, success. I (illegible) with four or five members being a little surprised at it, as I did not think he knew the author; but I am satisfied he does, and I am sure it is in good hands." Sheridan and Victor at this time directed the Dublin theatre, and those gentlemen had incurred the displeasure of the young critics for, perhaps among other demerits, inattention to pieces submitted to their judgment. In November, 1747, Dennis writes, "Ned (Burke) has finished the first canto of the Blackwater, and seen Victor, who has not read the play. Buck went to Hamlet—and such scenery!—not to talk of performance!" Shackleton replies, "Who do you tell Victor is the author of the comedy? If Burke would preserve any degree of good understanding with the pair he mentions, let him not slip out any high treason against Victor and Sheridan."

These hints render it not improbable that the comedy alluded to may have been by Burke. While still in the

hands of the manager, a letter from him to Shackleton (Oct. 17, 1747) says, it will be acted after Christmas. This, probably, never took place. For in May, 1748, a communication to the same friend (both in the "Club" correspondence) abuses Sheridan soundly as wanting taste, style, and common sense—"a pitiful fellow, who was never able to defend himself, and whose defenders are as weak as the cause"—language not unlikely to issue from a young and angry rejected dramatist. The above letter of October forms otherwise a fair specimen of their usual style of correspondence.

"You have so loaded me with letters and compliments that I find it very difficult to answer either, and they were unmerited as they were extraordinary, for I am neither an extraordinary correspondent nor writer, though if my writing was to be judged by its success in the inverse rule we use, it would be thought excellent. However, I must say I was by no means displeased with it, and you needed not to have desired me not to shew your last, for I should be the vainest fellow in the world if I did. I do really believe you to be my friend if any one is, for I see you can no more forbear praising me than Belinda (a young lady favourite), or dispraising Tremble. I am not such a master of the expressive part of friendship, but believe me, dear friend, I am by no means behindhand in the affectionate. This is sincere, and the only answer I can make to your (I won't say compliments) expressions of kindness, and I should be better pleased with your approbation of my pieces, bating the profit, than King George's.

"I don't know whether I shall congratulate or lament with you on your falling in love, for I see ('tis vain for you to deny it) you are over head and ears, and what is more extraordinary, with two. The judgment and sagacity with which you have drawn the character of the ladies shew that you perfectly know them, so that any advice from me on that score were quite needless. Belinda, I am glad, has triumphed; however, you seem to quit Julia with regret. How happy if you could have both to serve different ends of matrimony!

"I wrote to the Park before dinner, and after it went to Mr. Goddard with the money; he is greatly obliged to you; she looked charmingly, Dick, this evening, but I am insen-

sible to charms, when I tell you I do but perceive and not feel them, particularly when pointed by wit—‘Man delights not me, nor woman neither.’ I carried her Brennan’s Satyr; she is out of patience at it, and vows could she write as well, men should stand marked for more wickedness than e’er the race could redress. I doubt whether I should send you them lest they should cool your desire for matrimony, but by all means let not your mistress see them, unless the one you have a mind to discard. To her, indeed, you may present one, and ’twill affront her, I warrant. * * *

“Now we are on love, &c. Do your parents forward this affair? Are they ignorant of it? Or are you purposely together? I believe my friend will soon be a Paterfamilias, and then we shall in some measure lose Dick Shackleton, who will look with contempt on us bachelors. Whenever it happens I pray it may be fortunate, and so pray we all. We were together last night and did not forget you. We were rather mad than merry—but parted sober as to liquor.

“When I went to Kearney, Mrs. Kearney asked me whether I was come to Levy (Levee?) I said No! That couple (forgive me, I say it *entre nous*) are very haughty. I examined Michy before them in Horace and Homer; he performed very well, and answered his geographical questions with a facility that surprised me. He did not give very good English, and I did not wade very deep with him in the grammatical part of the Greek, because as the boy was little when taken out of his depth he might be in danger—and not at all for fear that I should slip myself; so I asked only some obvious questions. How were his parents ravished to hear their boy read Greek!

“How is Cavenagh! Poor Parker is not very ill, yet can’t go out. I like prodigiously your proposals; the thing will be improving to the boys, and I will send some materials towards it, but am very little at leisure. The Black (Water?) runs about a couple of (MS. illegible) in a fortnight. What you mention about D— seems at first view very practicable, but is not so. As for his mother she says that he is the only tie she has in this kingdom, else she would go and live with her relations in England; but tuition and usherships are harder to be got than you can well imagine

without interest, &c. which he very much wants. As for panegyrics on the fellows that would give the *coup de grace* to his fortunes. Sure your verses would do honour to Sappho. Were they all as good as four of them, they would be some of the first in the tongue; but I am surprised that you who every where else are so smooth, are not so here where it is most necessary—such are the fifth, ninth, and tenth lines, and some others. But when I found the above (MS. illegible) I had not read your similes of David and Goliath; more just or beautifully turned I never saw—I should have said not carefully enough; not but they struck me more strongly at first, but the multiplicity of matter drove them out of my head. Don't think I flatter when I say I think them excellent, as is the conclusion. What punishment will you inflict when I tell you I have constantly forgotten to carry Balbus to Mrs. Goldard, but (illegible) don't say, for before I can write again, T. A. will set that matter right.

"The Comedy will be acted before Christmas, when we will expect you, sans excuse. Mrs. Kearney said 'tother day we shall all soon see it for nothing, but I thank her for nothing. New plays are not seen for nothing; if they were, the author would get nothing by them, than which nothing can be worse—so there's nothing for nothing."

"I forget who he was that told me at the coffee house the other night that Cullen said he and I were very great (intimate), and have often lately been merry together—I laugh just now at your penny pot drinker. When I can find Tremble I will, but I wish he may be hanged in the mean time. Who knows what Providence may have in store for him! What has happened you after quitting Julia and Belinda has happened me in the very same manner often on such occasions. Don't you think a concave better than a spy-glass, as the latter are commonly so bad? Farewell, dear friend, and believe me to be yours most sincerely,

"Supply the date.

EDM. BURKE."

(Shackleton had accused him of seldom dating his letters.)

The poem on the Blackwater, once in possession of Shackleton, was, with some of his earlier letters from London, borrowed by his father and never returned. Unless, therefore, found in print in some of the smaller publications of

that day, it is probably lost. Another piece admired and often alluded to by the "Club" remains. Shackleton writes, July, 1747, to Dennis: "Pray let your next be sheet-full, and send 'Damer' inclosed. I intend to write no more till I see that piece. Pray send it by Tuesday's post." Dennis replies only by saying, "He'll send Damer the poem." Shackleton rejoins in August, "It is needless to tell thee, Dennis, for I won't say it to Burke, that I take Damer to be the best panegyric I ever read, except Waller's, who chiefly excels in that." * * * "Bid Ned (Burke) not be piqued that I don't expatiate in praise of his Damer, for there are certain images of the sublime in it which have dazzled my eyes so much, that like a man who has kept himself looking too long in the sun, I cannot see plain enough to pass judgment on the rest."

Here are the lines thus lauded by his juvenile and too partial critics. The gentleman addressed had a taste for planting, not then common in Ireland, and is believed to have resided near Dublin:

"July, 1747.

"To John Damer, Esq.

"The silent shade was always the retreat
Of the wise few, the learned, and the great;
Their shattered barks with seas tempestuous tired
To this calm harbour have at length retired;
Our souls whom vanity seduced to roam,
Find here their rest and recognize their home.

But if from wandering long in error's maze
To find the path of truth, be worth our praise;
How rich the laurels that should grace his head,
Who never from the path of virtue strayed;
But still through all his life pursued the plan,
That formed by God, seems fitting most for man;
Revives in Gardens by well ordered cost,
The Paradise that Adam's folly lost!
Pitying he looks on the vain world below
Their airy pleasures and fantastic woe,
And in his breast alone that calm shall find,
So much the wish and search of human kind.

The souls that unto loftiest heights would fly,
Among the crowd her pinions cannot ply;
But here by her own bounds alone confined,
Shews in her flight how God-like is the mind,
So much to solitude does mankind owe,
For all that they possess and all they know!

Truth to the wise here every object yields,
 Who reaps that nobler harvest from the fields;
 Th' air piercing pines whose lofty tops arise,
 Star-ward point out his mansion in the skies;
 When through the awful gloom inspired he roves,
 And Heaven's own voice instructs him in the groves
 Groves by the wise were ever sacred held,
 God in a bush by Moses was beheld;
 Or if with his we fabled Gods may name,
 In groves who chose to scent the sacred flame;
 Who doubts Dodona's grove? or does not know
 That whilom Nymphs in every tree did grow?
 Blest I pronounce the labours of his hand,
 That gives the sylvan honours to our land;
 Great is the task, and next to the divine,
 What nature left imperfect to refine;
 But if in these we no such honour find,
 How much more great to cultivate the mind!

This the Philosopher (who not betrayed
 By a false faith or envy to the shade)
 Constant in all his actions, still pursues,
 Augments his science and extends his views;
 Careful each rising folly to control,
 And hold a strict dominion o'er his soul;
 More wide his sway in what that soul contains,
 Than his who o'er the world's wide empire reigns!

Thus tranquil in the silent grove or mead,
 Damer! flows on the virtuous life you lead.
 Thus grows your wisdom with your growing day,
 Which for instruction you as fast convey.
 'Tis from your precepts that these verses flow,
 To you the love of solitude I owe;
 In justice therefore both to you belong,
 Th' inspiring subject and the inspired song.
 Sure you have sworn however short their stay,
 That not a guest go unimproved away;
 All states of life are equally your care,
 The rich your mind, the poor your fortune share;
 You must have found—shall I presume to sing
 The long lost work of Juda's sapient king?
 Of trees, which treats of Cedars proud and tall,
 To the low Hyssop that adorns the wall;
 Else why to you are all their species known,
 Or why, like him, do you possess alone,
 The knowledge of all natures and your own.

Nor when your soul shall you bright Heaven ascend,
 Your numerous blessings with your presence end;
 They, like your trees, which but small shoots at first,
 With tender head their earthly covering burst;
 But stretching onward eager for their prime,
 Receive new increments and strength by time;

Till crowned with daily honours they arise,
 Shade all the earth and vindicate the skies ;
 In the blest cool shall future swains be laid,
 And our son's sons rejoice beneath the shade.

For masts no more to Norway's coasts we'll roam,
 Thy firs much better will supply at home ;
 That when transplanted in th' unsteady sea,
 To every shore our riches shall convey.
 Where'er they go shall propagate thy name,
 And India not be foreign to thy fame,
 Till praise, sole meed on earth to virtue given,
 Be closed, or silent 'mid the joys of Heaven."

Among his efforts of kindness was one to assist his friend Dennis, afterwards a clergyman and who then also experienced his friendship—in procuring patronage from a "Countess," or lady so designated. "I designed," writes the latter, "visiting the Countess on Tuesday, but I did not go till Thursday. * * * To-day she both received my piece and returned it, and I received it very philosophically, but that temper did not hold. * * * The Poem on her is Ned's (Burke), and I think it very pretty. But the Countess did not like paying for what her glass told her as well."

"Belinda," mentioned in the previous letter, became in 1748 Mrs. Shackleton, and the event necessarily drew an epithalamium from "friend Burke."

To Richard Shackleton, on his Marriage.

When hearts are barter'd for less precious gold,
 And like the heart, the venal song is sold ;
 Each flame is dull, and but one base desire
 Kindles the bridal's torch and poet's fire ;
 The gods their violated rites forbear,
 The Muse flies far, and Hymen is not there.

But when true love binds in his roseate bands
 That rare but happy union, hearts and hands—
 When nought but friendship guides the poet's song,
 How sweet the verse ! the happy love how strong !
 Oh ! if the Muse, indulging my design,
 Should favour me, as love has favour'd thine,
 I'd challenge Pan at peril of my life,
 Though his Arcadia were to judge the strife.

Why don't the vocal groves ring forth their joy,
 And lab'ring echoes all their mouths employ ?
 To tell his bride what sighs, what plaints they heard,
 While yet his growing flame's success he fear'd,

And all his pains o'erpaid with transport now,
 When love exults and he enjoys his vow ?
 Silent ye stand—nor will bestow one lay
 Of all he taught to grace this happy day ;
 Can joy ne'er harbour in your sullen shade,
 Or are ye but for lovers' sorrows made ?

I'll leave you then, and from the Bride's bright eye,
 A happier omen take which cannot lie,
 Of growing time, still growing in delight,
 Of rounds of future years all mark'd with white,
 Through whose bright circles, free from envious chance,
 Concord and love shall lead an endless dance.

What is the monarch's crown, the shepherd's ease,
 The hero's laurel, and the poet's bays ?
 A load of toilsome life too dull to bear,
 If heav'n's indulgence did not add the fair,
 E'en Eden's sweets our Adam did despise,
 All its gay scenes could not delight his eyes,
 Woman God gave, and then 'twas Paradise.

Another Eve and Paradise are thine,
 May'st thou be father of as long a line !
 Your heart so fixed on her, and hers on you,
 As if the world afforded but the two,
 That to this age your constancy may prove,
 There yet remains on earth a power call'd love.

These to my friend, in lays not vainly loud.
 The palm, unknowing to the giddy crowd
 I sung, for these demand his steady truth,
 And friendship growing from our earliest youth ;
 A nobler lay unto his sire should grow,
 To whose kind care my better birth I owe,
 Who to fair science did my youth entice,
 Won from the paths of ignorance and vice.

As evidence of his mode of study, of seizing upon the substance of things rather than the form, and of an independence of opinion at that period new, he had previously ventured to read Shackleton a lesson in his own vocation, which has since obtained favour with others. "Your office of schoolmaster throws you amongst the ancient authors who are generally reputed the best, but as they are not commonly read and taught, the only use that seems to be made of them is merely to learn the language they are written in—a very strange inversion of the use of that kind of learning! To read of things to understand words, instead of learning words that we may be the better enabled to profit by the excellent things which are wrapped up in them. I would therefore advise you to be less inquisitive about the gram-

matical part of the author than you have been, not only for the above-mentioned reason, but because you will find it much the easier way of attaining the language. You will be pleased to consider after what manner we learn our mother tongue; first by conversation (to which reading when the language is dead is equivalent) we come to know the signification of all words, and the manner of placing them afterwards." A list of Greek and Latin authors is then given, which he recommends for perusal in order to the complete attainment of these languages, with a variety of remarks too long for insertion here.

In addition to the verses mentioned, he wrote a piece on Ballitore, an ode to Shackleton (1741), a few stanzas to the same friend of later date, two pieces collected by the editors of his Letters, and a few others obscurely alluded to in the Club correspondence, but not sufficiently distinct to trace. In March, 1747, he jocularly describes his studies—"taken up as passions or furors for a time—Natural Philosophy, Logic, Metaphysics, Mathematics, History—but is now entirely absorbed in the *furor poeticus*, which as skilful physicians assure me is as difficultly cured as a disease nearly akin to it, namely, the itch."

To write and not to print would be severe infliction on any author, more especially of the younger class. He therefore purposed to pursue the usual avenue to publicity, but for a time was deterred by the hopeless state of authorship in Dublin. "Not ten men in the city," he writes, "would read the lines whether good or bad. The people have no sort of curiosity that way—and no wonder—for books either in prose or verse seldom enter into the conversations of people of fortune." Eventually he did print before quitting his native city, but the time or form is not remembered. The fact became known to his friend, Dr. French Laurence, no doubt from himself, by whom it was mentioned to a gentleman who once contemplated as he told me, becoming his biographer.* A letter from Dennis to Shackleton, August, 1747, says, "There is a lady of fine genius in town who is going to publish her works, and Ned's translation will be joined with it." Who this lady was, or whether such publication took place, does not appear.

* The late Mr.—commonly called "Conversation"—Sharp.

One of his favourite poets at this time was Waller—" 'Tis surprising how so much softness and so much grandeur could dwell in one soul !" But the great masters in the art, Shakespeare, Spenser, Milton, and Young, claimed his chief devotion ; and passages marked by grandeur, or vigour of thought and expression, were caught and retained for meditation. The descriptive truth and solemn seriousness of the author of the *Night Thoughts* made so deep an impression that he could repeat long passages from memory ; and in a copy of the work which often formed a travelling companion in his youthful days, the following lines, stated to be in his handwriting, have been mentioned as written on one of the fly-leaves :—

Jove claim'd the verse old Homer sung,
But God himself inspired Young.

Milton, as already hinted, was a still greater favourite, his daring flights and sublime conceptions on the most awful of all subjects being so much above the track, and perhaps the powers, of any other poet. He always recommended the study of him to his son, and to all his younger friends, as exhibiting the highest possible range of mind in the English language ; and to the last, quoted him frequently both in conversation and in writing.

Exercises of his imagination did not, however, supersede close observation and judgment upon the serious facts of life passing before him. One of these was the number and too frequent want of due discrimination in the execution of criminals, which many years afterwards drew forth his humane interposition in England. In December, 1747, he commences a letter to Shackleton : " There was a young fellow hanged here yesterday for robbing his master of a few guineas. A few days before another was pardoned for the murder of five men. Was not that justice ?" Some time afterwards he is said to have first entered on political discussion or ridicule in reference to Mr. Henry Brooke, celebrated as the author of the "*Fool of Quality*," and the tragedy of "*Gustavus Vasa*," which from its alleged patriotic sentiments was for a time interdicted representation. Another subject for wit, still more celebrated as a patriot, was Dr. Charles Lucas, a medical practitioner of Dublin, who commencing

reformer in the Corporation, was obliged to fly from Ireland by a foolish vote of the Irish House of Commons, designating him "an enemy of his country." No details of Burke's papers on these local occurrences are now known. The first he satirized as *Diabetes*; the second as *Epaminondas*.

When the heats engendered by the French Revolution assailed even his memory, it was said that he had quitted the University without a degree. This is untrue. He commenced A.B. 23rd February, 1748, and proceeded A.M. 1751. No irregularities in college life have been laid to his charge. He joined a large body of students in punishing, or rather in forcing an apology on their knees in the college courts, from certain persons who had abused them for taking the part of Thomas Sheridan in the great, theatrical riot in 1747 which drove him for a time from Dublin. Burke's description of the proceedings in one of his letters is minute. It appears that the Lords Justices, who govern the kingdom in the absence of the Lord-Lieutenant, gave the youthful mob, who amounted to more than one hundred, well armed, and had forced open houses in order to find the offenders against their dignity, only a slight reprimand for this breach of the public peace. Shortly before this he had experienced a narrow escape from death or serious injury. "As I sat in a shop under Dick's coffee house, the back house which joined it fell, and buried Pue the coffee house keeper and his wife in the ruins." And duly chronicling more comic misadventures on the same day tells of a long chase through the streets after his hat and *wig* which had been blown off.

From the first his destination was the Bar. In that day it formed the great aim of the young men of Ireland distinguished for talents and ambition, more perhaps as an introduction to the House of Commons and thence to public dignities, than simply as a profitable profession or for distinction in the science of jurisprudence. To his studies there is allusion in the juvenile correspondence of Shackleton, who says, "Tell Burke if I don't get a letter from him to-morrow he shall plead no cause of mine when he is counsel; from that day *Libera nos Domine*, for I believe I shall grow very litigious." On the 23rd April, 1747, his name was enrolled at the Middle Temple. Early in 1750 he reached London in order to keep the customary terms; and in a letter to his Quaker

friend, 20th February, mentions the introduction of the Bill for the alteration of the Calendar by the Earl of Chesterfield. On the 2nd May his name appears again as entering into bond, his sureties being John Burke, Serjeant's Inn, Fleet Street, and Thomas Kelly, of the Middle Temple.

Removal from the paternal roof probably occasioned no serious regret. His father, though a man of character and integrity, possessed an unhappy temper, which the most sensitive in the family necessarily felt the most. Several allusions to it appear in the juvenile correspondence. Dennis writes, November 21, 1747: "My dear friend Burke leads a very unhappy life from his father's temper; and what is worse, there is no prospect of bettering it. He must not stir out at night by any means, and if he stays at home there is some new subject for abuse. There is but one bright spirit in the family, and they'd willingly destroy it. All the little oddities which are found in men of genius and are below their care, are eternal matter for railing with them. Pity him, and wish a change, is all I can do. * * * Care, I believe, wears as many shapes as there are men, but that is the most intolerable which proceeds from want of liberty. This is my friend's case, who told me this morning he wants that jewel of life, 'Peace of mind;' and his trouble was so great that he often forms desperate resolutions. Garret suffers equally, but is less sensible of it; for the purest spirits feel best."

CHAPTER II.

First Impressions of London and England generally—Contemplates an Attempt for the Logic Professorship of Glasgow—Report about St. Omer—Letter to his Father—An Asiatic acquaintance—Idea of a Wife—First Publications.

His first impressions on viewing the English metropolis are vividly expressed in a letter to his school-fellow already mentioned, Mr. Matthew Smith. The allusions to Westminster Abbey and the House of Commons, "the chosen temples of fame," as he said on another occasion, will be

esteemed by those who look to auguries sufficiently remarkable. The whole ~~is~~ in a peculiar degree expressive of *character*, the reflections, ingenious, just, and even profound like those of most of his future letters, which though written with a flowing pen, were by many believed to be studied compositions.

“ You’ll expect some short account of my journey to this great city. To tell you the truth, I made very few remarks as I rolled along, for my mind was occupied with many thoughts, and my eyes often filled with tears, when I reflected on all the dear friends I left behind; yet the prospects could not fail to attract the attention of the most indifferent: country seats sprinkled round on every side, some in the modern taste, some in the style of old De Coverley Hall, all smiling on the neat but humble cottage: every village as neat and compact as a bee-hive, resounding with the busy hum of industry; and inns like palaces.

“ What a contrast to our poor country, where you’ll scarce find a cottage ornamented with a chimney! But what pleased me most of all was the progress of agriculture, my favourite study, and my favourite pursuit, if Providence had blessed me with a few paternal acres.

“ A description of London and its natives would fill a volume. The buildings are very fine: it may be called the sink of vice: but its hospitals and charitable institutions, whose turrets pierce the skies like so many electrical conductors, avert the wrath of Heaven. The inhabitants may be divided into two classes, the *undooers* and the *undome*; generally so, I say, for I am persuaded there are many men of honesty, and women of virtue in every street. An Englishman is cold and distant at first; he is very cautious even in forming an acquaintance: he must know you well before he enters into friendship with you; but if he does, he is not the first to dissolve that sacred bond: in short, a real Englishman is one that performs more than he promises; in company he is rather silent, extremely prudent in his expressions, even in politics, his favourite topic. The women are not quite so reserved; they consult their glasses to the best advantage; and as nature is very liberal in her gifts to their persons, and even minds, it is not easy for a young man to escape their glances, or to shut his ears to their softly flowing accents.

“As to the state of learning in this city, you know I have not been long enough in it to form a proper judgment of that subject. I don't think, however, there is as much respect paid to a man of letters on this side of the water as you imagine. I don't find that genius, the ‘rath primrose, which forsaken dies,’ is patronized by any of the nobility, so that writers of the first talents are left to the capricious patronage of the public. Notwithstanding discouragement, literature is cultivated in a high degree. Poetry raises her enchanting voice to heaven. History arrests the wings of Time in his flight to the gulf of oblivion. Philosophy, the queen of arts, and the daughter of heaven, is daily extending her intellectual empire. Fancy sports on airy wing like a meteor on the bosom of a summer cloud; and even Metaphysics spins her cobwebs, and catches some flies.

“The House of Commons not unfrequently exhibits explosions of eloquence that rise superior to those of Greece and Rome, even in their proudest days. Yet, after all, a man will make more by the figures of arithmetic than the figures of rhetoric, unless he can get into the trade wind, and then he may sail secure over Pactolean sands. As to the stage, it is sunk, in my opinion, into the lowest degree; I mean with regard to the trash that is exhibited on it; but I don't attribute this to the taste of the audience, for when Shakspeare warbles his ‘native wood-notes,’ the boxes, pit, and gallery, are crowded—and the gods are true to every word, if properly winged to the heart.

“Soon after my arrival in town I visited Westminster Abbey: the moment I entered I felt a kind of awe pervade my mind which I cannot describe; the very silence seemed sacred. Henry the Seventh's chapel is a very fine piece of Gothic architecture, particularly the roof; but I am told that it is exceeded by a chapel in the University of Cambridge. Mrs. Nightingale's monument has not been praised beyond its merit. The attitude and expression of the husband in endeavouring to shield his wife from the dart of death, is natural and affecting. But I always thought that the image of death would be much better represented with an extinguished torch inverted, than with a dart. Some would imagine that all these monuments were so many monuments of folly;—I don't think so; what useful lessons of morality and sound philosophy do they not exhibit!

When the high-born beauty surveys her face in the polished parian, though dumb the marble, yet it tells her that it was placed to guard the remains of as fine a form, and as fair a face as her own. They show besides how anxious we are to extend our loves and friendships beyond the grave, and to snatch as much as we can from oblivion—such is our natural love of immortality; but it is here that letters obtain the noblest triumphs; it is here that the swarthy daughters of Cadmus may hang their trophies on high; for when all the pride of the chisel and the pomp of heraldry yield to the silent touches of time, a single line, a half-worn-out inscription, remain faithful to their trust. Blest be the man that first introduced these strangers into our islands, and may they never want protection or merit! I have not the least doubt that the finest poem in the English language, I mean Milton's *Il Penseroso*, was composed in the long-resounding aisle of a mouldering cloister or ivy'd abbey. Yet after all do you know that I would rather sleep in the southern corner of a little country church-yard, than in the tomb of the Capulets. I should like, however, that my dust should mingle with kindred dust. The good old expression 'family burying-ground' has something pleasing in it, at least to me."

During the first few years of his stay in London, the vacations were devoted to an examination of the interior of the country, and sometimes crossing to Ireland. In 1751, as already mentioned, he took his master's degree, and is believed to have made some stay in Cork. Health, as much as curiosity, formed the inducement to these excursions. The former continued delicate and ill adapted to severe study, though this does not seem to have relaxed his diligence in any degree towards general literature; and that the remedial means adopted did not wholly fail of effect, we have his own testimony.

Writing to Shackleton, April 5, 1751, he says, "I am much obliged to you, my good friend, for your desire of knowing my affairs. Really they are such as nothing but friendship could have any delight in knowing. My health is tolerable, thank God; my studies too in the same degree, and my situation not disagreeable. I intend soon to be a good distance from town, in hopes of bettering all three, as well as lessening my expenses." In another letter of the

same year, dated 31st August, from Monmouth, whither he had proceeded from Bath and Bristol, he alludes playfully to his more juvenile writings ; hopes his present exercises (alluding to the law) may be attended with better success than his literary studies, on the ground that "though a middling poet cannot be endured, there is some quarter for a middling lawyer."

To the same correspondent, September 28, 1752, dated from the house of a Mrs. Druce, Turlain, near Bradford in Wiltshire, where, in company with William Burke, he made some stay enjoying the amusements of the country, he describes how the preceding part of the year had been employed, "Since I had your letter I have often shifted the scene. I spent part of the winter, that is, term-time, in London and part in Croydon in Surrey ; about the beginning of summer finding myself attacked with my old complaint (an affection of the chest, and a pain in the side, mentioned in the juvenile correspondence), I went once more to Bristol, and found the same benefit ; I thank God for it."

Whether he found the law, as a profession, alien to his habits, his health incompetent to its persevering pursuit, or became weaned from it by that attachment to general literature which has in so many other instances of men of genius proved irresistible, it is certain that his views soon changed. At the expiration of the usual time he was not called to the bar.

In London he met many old friends, school and college acquaintance. With Dr. Brocklesby, then pushing his way as physician, he renewed his acquaintance ; and with Dr. Joseph Fenn Sleigh, already mentioned, who was finishing his studies, commenced it. Both were Quakers, and both afterwards quitted that persuasion. About the same period the late Arthur Murphy, then carrying on the *Gray's Inn Journal*, hearing the acquirements of his young countryman, Burke, loudly praised by some mutual friends, gained an introduction to him, and on the first interview assented to the general opinion of his being a superior young man : an impression which every succeeding meeting served to increase. The diversity of his knowledge, and the force and originality of his observations, were striking. In history, politics, polite letters, and philosophy, there seemed little with which he was not familiar. His attachment to the

latter, "queen of arts, and daughter of heaven," as he had called her in the letter to Smith, was so strong, that it is not surprising he should wish to unite his interest with his taste, in the idea entertained about this time of trying for the professorship of logic, then vacant in the University of Glasgow.

A principal inducement to this step was probably the recollection that Ireland had more than once supplied the Scottish seats of learning with eminent men. Her last and greatest present to the University in question was, in the language of Dugald Stewart, "the profound and eloquent" Dr. Francis Hutcheson. Born in the north of Ireland and settling afterwards in Dublin, he soon became distinguished by his writings as one of the first philosophers of his age. A dissenter at a time when dissenters were looked upon with an evil eye, he enjoyed the friendship and protection of Primate Boulter, Archbishop King, Bishop Syngé, Lords Melesworth, Granville, and others, the most eminent in that country for virtue and talents. His fame at length drew an invitation to the University of Glasgow in 1729, first to the Logic, and then to the Moral Philosophy Chair; an event of great moment in the intellectual and literary history of Scotland. His celebrity attracted a very large class from all parts of the country. He was the immediate precursor of Adam Smith, Reid, Beattie, Ferguson, and others; the instructor of some of them, and from his celebrity, a source of interest and emulation to all. The ingenuity and eloquence of his lectures, says the distinguished philosopher already quoted, "contributed very powerfully to diffuse in Scotland that taste for analytical discussion and that spirit of liberal inquiry, to which the world is indebted for some of the most valuable productions of the eighteenth century." And again, "Dr. Hutcheson, of Glasgow, by his excellent writings and still more by his eloquent lectures, had diffused among a numerous race of pupils a liberality of sentiment and a refinement of taste, unknown before in this part of the island."

* Upon this eminent man, whose "Inquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue," is believed to have suggested the idea at least of the "Inquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful," our young adventurer had his eye, in aiming at running perhaps a similar career of philosophical fame.

Scotsmen, he understood, were no less fond of abstractions in the schools, than they are of the more substantial realities of active life. To suit their taste in the former respect he laid in, in addition to an unusually ample stock of general knowledge, a large adventure in metaphysics,—no less than a refutation of the systems of his own countryman the celebrated Berkeley, and of Hume. There is also no reason to doubt, for his own words to Malone are decisive of the fact, that he had at this time sketched the outline of the essay alluded to as an additional claim to the vacant chair. This honour he failed to obtain; under what particular circumstances is not now known. It is certain that he never proceeded to public competition; but being in that quarter of the island, and probably hearing that the office was to be awarded to the successful competitor in a public trial of skill, he took the resolution of contesting the palm with the Scottish literati, until informed that certain private arrangements in the university and city, rendered any such attempt hopeless. The inquiry made of Principal Taylor is satisfactory as to Burke having been a candidate, but not as to the exact date. His successful competitor was Mr. James Clow.*

* Since the above was written, the writer has been favoured with the following communication from Mr. Duguid Stewart:—

“I am very doubtful of the fact that ever Burke was a candidate for a professorship in Glasgow. I remember perfectly a conversation with Mr. (Adam) Smith on the subject, in the course of which he said that the story was extremely current, but he knew of no evidence upon which it rested; and he suspected it took its rise entirely from an opinion which he had expressed at Glasgow upon the publication of Burke's book on the Sublime and Beautiful, that the author of that book would be a great acquisition to the College, if he would accept of a chair.”

This opinion, though entitled to every respect, is not decisive. The evidence is rather the other way; for the story is not only old, but was repeated three or four times in print during Mr. Burke's life, and on one occasion came immediately under his eye without receiving any formal contradiction, which, as it did not come under the head *slander*, he might have deigned to give it. The name of his more successful opponent also is expressly mentioned. In several interviews previous to his death with the late Dr. Gillies, the historian of Greece, after many personal compliments and some animated encomiums on Burke, he said.—“He was once near having a chair, in my college, that is Glasgow.” I said I had endeavoured to establish that point, but found the fact doubted both before the publication of my biography and since. “*Sir, there is no doubt upon the matter. I saw many years ago, a letter of thanks from him, to Principal Leechman, on the subject.*” This, if correct, would be decisive;

He returned with undiminished spirit to his studies ; and to what continued to be a favourite enjoyment, occasional excursions through the country. Having extended his journey to France, it was believed by many who knew the falsehood of the report of his having been educated at St. Omer, that he had simply visited that town. But even this is not the fact. He observed at his own table more than once, "He could not but consider it a remarkable circumstance (in allusion to this report) that in three or four journeys he had made in France, St. Omer happened to be the chief place in the northern provinces which he had *never* visited previous to the year 1773, and this not from design, but accident." Mr. Wilkes used pleasantly to say that this rumour reminded him of the *three black crows*, and gave the following account of its origin. "In reply to an argument used by Burke in the House, somebody said it was only fit for a Jesuit to urge. It was clear from his accent, name, and connexions, that he was an Irishman : an Irishman, and a papist, in the opinions of some of our honest country gentlemen, were synonymous : St. Omer contained a Jesuit seminary : at this seminary many Irish priests were educated :—*ergo*, it was a clear case among the wise men of Gotham, that Burke must be a Jesuit, and must have been educated at St. Omer."

From the indistinct notices which can now be collected, it is said, that his curiosity was very active ; the ideal and simply beautiful being mingled with the useful ; and pictures and statues, a farm-yard, a mine, or a manufactory, were equally subjects for investigation. His more sedentary pursuits were followed with a degree of assiduity which vivacious men undervalue ; but which more sober judgments know to be a good substitute for all other talents. His application was unwearied. Unlike most persons of vivid fancy, he had good sense enough to recollect, that the most brilliant imaginations should not only have wings to fly, but legs to stand upon ; in other words, that genius, unpropped by knowledge, may serve to amuse, but will rarely be useful in the more important concerns of mankind.

The desire to acquire and the drudgery of acquiring, were promoted by habits of life, which concurring testimony went but the Doctor at his advanced age, may have confounded the election of Burke as Lord Rector with that to the Logic chair.

to prove were more than commonly equable and temperate. Moderation in the pleasurable enjoyments of youth seemed so much a gift from nature, that at a period of life when the passions too often run riot, he was either free from vicious and irregular propensities, or possessed the next best gift of Providence,—the power to control them. His excesses were not in dissipation, but in study. He gave way to no licentious inclinations. He did not know a single game at cards; and wine was no further a favourite than as it contributed to social intercourse, of which he was at every period of life, with literary and scientific men, extremely fond, so far as the pleasures of conviviality could be enjoyed without its excesses.

He who devotes his days to the treasuring up of knowledge, may be permitted to set apart the evenings to recreation. In Dublin, as we have seen, he had become attached to the drama from its intimate relation to literature, to poetry, and to the displays it affords of human nature in various aspects. To an inhabitant of a vast metropolis like London, the theatre is almost the natural resort of a literary man; for there even when most in search of relaxation, he may find some not unprofitable employment for the mind.

By Arthur Murphy who had by this time attempted the stage as a profession, by many of the leading theatrical critics who frequented the Grecian Coffee House, and by several brother Templars equally fond of dramatic amusements, he was introduced to some of the principal performers. Among these was Garrick, from whom he confessed to have profited in oratorical action and in the management of his voice, at whose table he saw many of the most distinguished characters of the age, and where his talents and powers of conversation became more generally known. To Macklin also, at whose debating society which flourished for a few months in 1754, he is believed to have made his first attempt at public speaking, and whom it is said he recommended soon after to Mr. Wedderburn then coming forward at the bar, in order to get rid of his Scottish accent. To the celebrated Mrs. (or Miss) Woffington, so well known in the annals of the theatre for the possession of beauty, wit, vivacity, fascination of manners, and very considerable powers of mind, in fact for almost every thing but that which alone can make a woman respectable—virtue. Men

of high rank, of learning, of wealth, of wit, and even of morals, sought her society, and at her house he extended his acquaintance.

About this period he first entertained the idea of trying his fortune in the American colonies; a purpose not relinquished for more than two years afterward. But at this moment finding his father to be strongly averse to the design, he surrendered his own decided conviction of its utility to a sense of filial submission, expressed in the following dutiful letter.*

“Honoured Sir,

“I had a letter by the last post from Mr. Nagle (his uncle), in which he tells me that he gave you my letter, and informs me at the same time of the reception which the proposal it contained met with from you and the family. I am I own surprised, and very much concerned that this proposal should prove any cause either of grief or anger to you; certain I am that nothing ever was further from my inclination than the least intention of making it so.

“When I informed you of my design, it was not to declare any determined resolution which I had taken, but to desire your opinion on an affair which I believed it advisable for me to engage in. This affair seemed to me neither to be wrong in itself, nor unattended with a reasonable prospect of success. I proposed it to you, as I must and ought to propose to you any thing I think to my advantage, with a view of having your advice upon every material step I should take in it. This is what in prudence I ought to have done, and what every motive of duty and gratitude ought to have obliged me to do. I have nothing nearer my heart than to make you easy; and I have no scheme or design, however reasonable it may seem to me, that I would not gladly sacrifice to your quiet and submit to your judgment. You have surely had trouble enough with a severe disorder, without any addition from uneasiness at my conduct.”

(Here this letter, written on a sheet of foolscap, becomes unintelligible from part being torn away and defaced; but by the few words which remain,

* Rescued, among several others of his letters, from a curious repository, the lining of an old family arm-chair, by some relatives in the county of Galway; and transmitted to Mr. Haviland Burke, who communicated the originals to the writer.

it is apparent that a place of credit "*in one of the provinces*" (of America) was vacant, which he had been offered; and having consulted some persons upon the propriety of accepting it, "they all to a man highly approved of it." The conclusion of the letter remains entire.)

"I shall therefore follow your wishes, not with reluctance but with pleasure; and really nothing has this long time chagrined me so much, as to find that the proposal of this matter has been disagreeable to you: I ought to have a satisfaction in desiring your judgment in whatever appeared to my advantage, as this strongly did. I shall be ready to yield to it always, and to go to Ireland when you think proper, and the end, for which you desire I should go, can be answered.

"I feel to the bottom of my soul for all you have this long time suffered from your disorder, and it grieves me deeply to think that at such a time your sufferings should be at all increased by any thing which looks ill-judged in my conduct. May God make them lighter every moment, and continue to you and my mother very many very happy years, and every blessing I ought to wish you for your care, your tenderness, and your indulgence to me. I am in some trouble and anxiety about this matter; but in real truth, in all my designs I shall have nothing more at heart than to show myself to you and my mother a dutiful, affectionate, and obliged son.

"EDMUND BURKE.

"London, March 11, 1755."

An accidental meeting in St. James's Park at this time made him the friend of a very enterprising and original character, who though a native of the East, nearly unknown in England, and consequently appearing in rather a questionable shape, presented evidences of a mind so much above his situation as to claim countenance and protection from the generously disposed. This man, with a little more of the favour of fortune, might have turned out one of the most conspicuous, as he was one of the most adventurous, spirits of modern times. Sir W. Jones thus writes of him (May, 1786), to Sir John Macpherson, Governor-General of India:

"I have already thanked you for your attentions to Emin, and I beg to repeat them; many in England will be

equally thankful. He is a fine fellow ; and if active service should be required, he would seek nothing so much as to be placed in the most perilous edge of the battle." When Burke discovered him, he was not then, as afterward, known to the Duke of Northumberland and other men of rank and station. But he was in distress. That was enough for his new Irish friend, who, according to Emin's account, took him home to his apartments at the Pope's Head, a bookseller's near the Temple, made him his amanuensis in transcribing the supposed letter of Lord Bolingbroke and the treatise on the Sublime and Beautiful, told him not to despair however apparently hopeless his condition, but to put his trust in God ; and seldom missed a day without seeing and consoling him. On the first meeting, Emin begged to be favoured with his name : " Sir, it is Edmund Burke. I am a runaway son from a father, as you are." He then presented him half a guinea, saying, " Upon my honour this is what I have at present—please to accept of it." Above thirty years afterwards, March, 1789, the patron replied to an address from him in a letter to be found in the Memoir of Sir W. Jones, in which their acquaintance is noticed.

" There are many changes here of all kinds since you left us. The Duke of Northumberland, your friend, is dead. Mrs. Montagu is still alive, and when I see her I shall put her in mind of you. Many changes, too, of a much more striking nature have happened since you and I became acquainted. Who could have thought the day I first saw you in St. James's Park that this kingdom would rule the greater part of India ? But kingdoms rise and pass away—emperors are captive and blinded—pedlars become emperors."

Distinction in literature as one of his youthful and latest passions, was sought no less by that early maturity of mind of which his letters and contemporary testimony furnish evidence, than the natural desire of advancing his fortune and reputation. Frequent intercourse with the literary society of the metropolis would necessarily inspire the wish to test the vigour of his pen by comparing it with that of others through the usual medium of the press. The state of letters in London, to which he alludes in a previous communication, by observing that much more was to be made by the figures of arithmetic than the figures of rhetoric, does not indeed appear to have inspired any very sanguine expectations of

authorship being a source of pecuniary advantage. But the disappointment experienced in the projected transatlantic expedition, in all probability became an additional stimulus to endeavour to distinguish himself in this or some other leading department of life. His finances were narrow. The paternal allowance did not exceed one hundred pounds per annum, or occasionally a little more. Any thing additional which literature might produce would necessarily be desirable, as adding to his means of enjoyment, his little benevolences, as in the instance just mentioned of Emin, or to his information by travelling. That he had his eye early drawn to this source of income appears from a communication in the juvenile correspondence, December 24, 1747, in speaking of his friend Dennis. "Don't you think had he money to bear his charges but 'twere his best course to go to London? I am told that a man who writes, can't miss there of getting some bread, and possibly good. I heard the other day of a gentleman who maintained himself in the study of the law by writing pamphlets in favour of the ministry."

The first productions of even great writers are seldom preserved, and are perhaps seldom worth preserving. His do not seem to have escaped the general fate. There is no doubt that some were published previous to those which appear first in his works, though nothing more than vague rumour can be ascertained respecting them now. Even his poem on the Blackwater, so much applauded by his young friends, appears to be lost, his father having borrowed it with some early letters from London from Shackleton and never returned them.

One piece was believed by Murphy to be a poem, or poetical translation from the Latin, which is not improbable. Soon after his arrival in London he is said to have written to Ireland for anecdotes to engraft into concise accounts of Henry Brooke, whom he had assailed as a politician, but whom he found of more importance than he expected, and also of his new acquaintance Mrs. Woffington. These, with the poetry in question, may possibly be traced by the more diligent collectors of the pamphlets and periodical publications of the time. The *Essay on the Drama*, preserved in his works, is believed to be of the same date. So also may be many of the materials collected for a work on the condition of the Roman Catholics of Ireland, which are likewise among his

posthumous remains. Politics were probably not neglected ; and in criticism, for which his range of information and keenness of remark offered peculiar facilities, he is supposed to have written much.

His first avowed work, the "Vindication of Natural Society," which came out in the spring of 1756, may be in fact termed a piece of philosophical criticism couched in the guise of serious irony. It was an octavo pamphlet of 106 pages ; and originated in an opinion generally expressed in literary society, of the style of Lord Bolingbroke being not only the best of that time, but in itself wholly inimitable. Some favour also was felt by a few for what were called his philosophical opinions which had been published in March, 1754.

The design of the piece was to produce a covert mimicry both of that writer's style and principles ; and particularly by pushing the latter to their ultimate results, to force conviction on the mind of the reader of their unsoundness, by showing that the arguments employed by the Peer against religion, applied as strongly against every other institution of civilized men. His lordship's philosophy, such as it was, was the newest pattern of the day, and of course excited considerable notice as coming from a man who had made so conspicuous a figure in politics ; and whose career, after a youth spent in the stews, and a manhood in turbulence and disaffection to the government of his country, seemed appropriately terminated by an old age of infidelity. Accustomed to disregard honest and wise opinions on other matters, he wanted courage to shew his contempt of them on this ; but at his death left to Mallet, a brother infidel, the office of ushering his benevolent legacy of deism into light ; which drew from Dr. Johnson, when asked his opinion of it, the exclamation, "A scoundrel ! who spent his life in charging a popgun against Christianity ; and a coward ! who afraid of the report of his own gun, left half-a-crown to a hungry Scotchman to draw the trigger after his death."

The imitation was so perfect as to constitute identity rather than resemblance. Lord Chesterfield, Bishop Warburton, and others, for a short time believed it genuine. Mallet went to Dodsley's, when filled with literati, purposely to disavow it. It was not merely the language, style, and general eloquence of the original which had been caught ; but the whole mind of the noble author, his train of thought,

and the power to enter into his conceptions, seemed to be transfused into the pen of his imitator with a fidelity and "grace beyond the reach of art." Several able critics of the present day have expressed their admiration of it in strong terms. One of them, in a celebrated periodical work, *Edinburgh Review*, alluding to this power of copying an author in *all* his peculiarities, says,—

"In Burke's imitation of Bolingbroke (the most perfect specimen perhaps that ever will exist of the art in question) we have all the qualities which distinguish the style, or we may indeed say the genius of that noble writer, concentrated and brought before us; so that an ordinary reader, who in perusing his genuine works merely felt himself dazzled and disappointed—delighted and wearied he could not tell why, is now enabled to form a definite and precise conception of the causes of those opposite sensations—and to trace to the nobleness of the diction, and the inaccuracy of the reasoning—the boldness of the propositions, and the rashness of the inductions—the magnificence of the pretensions, and the feebleness of the performance, those contradictory judgments with the confused result of which he had been perplexed in his study of the original." This tract was reprinted in 1765. Mr. Burke used to mention at his table, that the first Lord Lyttleton told him that Lord Bolingbroke never committed any of his works to paper himself, but invariably dictated to a secretary. This accounted for the tautology and repetitions so common in his writings. In company he was fluent and eloquent, speaking, or rather dictating to his hearers with an air of authority more resembling the formal harangue of the House of Commons than the usual tone of conversation, and seldom allowing himself to be interrupted or contradicted.

A few months afterwards, in the same year, appeared "*A Philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful.*" Of this celebrated work, familiar to men of liberal education, and one of occasional reference in our universities, little more need be said than that it is perfectly original in the execution and design. Longinus indeed had written on the sublime, and Addison partially on grandeur and beauty; but neither of them profoundly nor distinctly. They exemplify and illustrate rather than analyze or dive to the sources of those impressions on

the mind ; and they even confound the sublime with the beautiful on many occasions. But this work marks the line between them so distinctly that they cannot well be mistaken ; he investigates the constituents and appearances of each scientifically, and illustrates his views with great happiness. Johnson considered it a model of true philosophical criticism. Blair, who praises its originality and ingenuity, has profited much by it in his remarks on sublimity and beauty, as well as in the theory of that often-discussed quality, taste, which in this work is justly observed to prevail in our minds "either from a greater degree of natural sensibility, or from a closer and longer attention to the object."

Toward the decline of life, he was solicited by several intimate friends, particularly Sir Joshua Reynolds and Dr. Laurence, to revise and enlarge this treatise by the addition of such facts and observations as thirty years must have supplied. The popularity of the work, they said, and the excellence of what was already done, fully deserved that it should be rendered as complete as possible. His reply usually was, that he was no longer fit to pursue speculative matters of that sort. His mind had been occupied so completely by other and more active business, that he could not recur to them with that ease and satisfaction to himself which such investigations required. Besides, several other writers had pursued the track he had chalked out, so that there was little of novelty to add. To Dr. Laurence he said, he was never more fit for abstract speculations than when at college and immediately afterwards—that he had about that time speculated long and deeply—and in proof of the fact said, he had begun his *Essay on the Sublime and Beautiful* before he was nineteen years old, and had kept it by him for seven years before it was published. It was at the same period also he had written to confute Berkeley.

As indicative of character, of extensive and various observation and accurate deduction, both these productions are remarkable, particularly the latter considering the time of life at which it was written. From the nature of the subject independent of his own testimony, it is evident that it could not be a work of haste, but of much inquiry, of keen penetration, and of diligent remark, continued for a considerable period of time ; and was finished, as we have seen, before he was twenty-six ; an age at which few men,

whatever their attainments, think of starting for one of the highest degrees in philosophy, much less are enabled to make good their claim to the distinction. Both works are evidences of a mind early and deeply reflective; investigating for itself; coming out of the inquiry not with a desire to shine in paradox, or to astonish the world by propounding something very new or very adverse to all received opinions, but with the conviction that the general belief of mankind in the main questions that interest them, religion, politics, and philosophy, is right. The simple, unornamented style of the *Inquiry*, is in good taste as applied to a philosophical subject.

Continued application to these pursuits produced a fit of illness—too often the lot of the labourer in literature, whose existence, though gratifying to the pride of the human mind from real or fancied superiority over others, is in practice one of the most irksome. It admits of little relaxation. It must be pursued chiefly in solitude. Society, which cheers and animates most other men in their calling, becomes an impediment to the more brilliant conceptions of the author. His business is with books; his chosen companions, the mute yet vivacious offspring of the brain. Bound to his desk, either by over-ruling necessity or scarcely less forcible inclination, the lighter enjoyments of life cannot be often tasted without interfering with the continuity of his pursuits. Before him lies the stated task—the page not of nature but of the printer—to which he must sometimes unwillingly turn when more attractive objects invite him elsewhere. For the sun may shine, the fields look green, the flowers bloom in vain for him who in sallying forth to refresh his jaded intellect or exhausted frame, must neglect the occupation which possibly gives him subsistence. Such is the case now and then with the too diligent student. Cumberland has given a recital of bodily suffering endured in the acquisition of learning; and Burke, had he written his own life, might have told a story still more distressing.

For the re-establishment of his health, Bath and Bristol were again resorted to with success. In the former city resided his countryman Dr. Christopher Nugent, a very amiable man and esteemed physician, who having some previous acquaintance with the patient, invited him to his

house as better adapted to the wants of an invalid. An attachment to his daughter, Miss Jane Mary Nugent, was the result. The guest offered her nearly all he had at this time to offer except what his father supplied, his heart and hand, which were accepted. She was born in the south of Ireland, though educated chiefly in England; her father a Roman Catholic, her mother a rigid Presbyterian; who not only stipulated for the free enjoyment of her own religion, but for the privilege of educating her daughters in the same tenets, which were strictly retained by Mrs. Burke. It has been asserted through ignorance or determined party animosity, that she was a Romanist; and among much other abuse vented against her husband was, that he kept a Popish priest in the house for her, upon whom he exercised his love for deistical raillery. These are sad evidences of political malice, but form an epitome of that "hunt of obloquy," in his own words, "which has ever pursued me with a full cry through life."

This union was to him a source of comfort ever after. Added to affectionate admiration of his talents, she possessed accomplishments, good sense, goodness of heart, and a sweetness of manners and disposition which served to allay many of the anxieties of his future career—the labours to attain fame and independence, the fretful moments attendant on severe study, the irritations produced by party and political zeal, and the tempestuous passions engendered by constant contention in active parliamentary life. He repeatedly declared that "every care vanished the moment he entered under his own roof." He wrote a beautifully descriptive prose paper, *The idea of a wife*, which he presented to her one morning on the anniversary of their marriage, delicately heading the paper thus, "The Character of ———," leaving her to fill up the blank. To his intimate friends also, the earliest as well as the latest, she was equally a theme of praise. William Burke thus writes of her in March, 1766:—"Poor Mrs. Burke has been visited by a most severe cold; the delicacy of her frame, and that infinity of intrinsic worth that makes her dear to us, raised some anxious apprehensions; but, thank God! she is so much better that our fears are no more." Madame D'Arbly and Hannah More bear testimony to her amiable manners in society. Men of genius are seldom so fortunate in their partners, or at least

seldom think themselves so. By nature an ideal race, they look perhaps for more perfections than commonly fall to the lot of frail humanity, and expecting to meet with angels, are sadly disappointed in finding mere women.

The ideas of the piece alluded to partake of a high order of poetry, but perhaps more fully and distinctly expressed than the restricted nature of rhyme is likely to allow to any other than the effusions of the very first poets. It is as follows :—

“ The Character of ———— .”

“ I intend to give my idea of a woman ; if it at all answers any original, I shall be pleased ; for if such a person as I would describe really exists, she must be far superior to my description : and such as I must love too well to be able to paint as I ought.

“ She is handsome, but it is a beauty not arising from features, from complexion, or from shape ; she has all three in a high degree, but it is not by these she touches an heart ; it is all that sweetness of temper, benevolence, innocence, and sensibility, which a face can express that forms her beauty.

“ She has a face that just raises your attention at first sight, it grows on you every moment, and you wonder it did no more than raise your attention at first.

“ Her eyes have a mild light, but they awe you when she pleases ; they command like a good man out of office, not by authority but by virtue.

“ Her features are not perfectly regular ; that sort of exactness is more to be praised than to be loved ; for it is never animated.

“ Her stature is not tall ; she is not made to be the admiration of every body, but the happiness of one.

“ She has all the firmness that does not exclude delicacy : she has all the softness that does not imply weakness.

“ There is often more of the coquette shown in an affected plainness than in a tawdry finery : she is always clean without preciseness or affection. Her gravity is a gentle thoughtfulness, that softens the features without discomposing them ; she is usually grave.

“ Her smiles are inexpressible.

“ Her voice is a low, soft music, not formed to rule in

public assemblies, but to charm those who can distinguish a company from a crowd; it has this advantage, you must come close to her to hear it.

"To describe her body describes her mind; one is the transcript of the other. Her understanding is not shown in the variety of matters it exerts itself on, but in the goodness of the choice she makes.

"She does not display it so much in saying or doing striking things, as in avoiding such as she ought not to say or do.

"She discovers the right and wrong of things not by reasoning but sagacity: most women, and many good ones, have a closeness and something selfish, in their dispositions; she has a true generosity of temper; the most extravagant cannot be more unbounded in their liberality, the most covetous not more cautious in the distribution.

"No person of so few years can know the world better; no person was ever less corrupted by that knowledge.

"Her politeness seems to flow rather from a natural disposition to oblige, than from any rules on that subject; and therefore never fails to strike those who understand good breeding and those who do not.

"She does not run with a girlish eagerness into new friendships, which, as they have no foundation in reason, serve only to multiply and embitter disputes; it is long before she chooses, but then it is fixed for ever; and the first hours of romantic friendships are not warmer than hers after the lapse of years. As she never disgraces her good nature by severe reflections on any body, so she never degrades her judgment by immoderate or ill-placed praises; for every thing violent is contrary to her gentleness of disposition and the evenness of her virtue; she has a steady and firm mind, which takes no more from the female character than the solidity of marble does from its polish and lustre. She has such virtues as make us value the truly great of our own sex; she has all the winning graces, that makes us love even the faults we see in the weak and beautiful of hers."

The war then lately commenced with France exciting attention to the American colonies as one of the chief points in dispute, there came out in April, 1757, in two volumes,

octavo, "An Account of the European Settlements in America."

Doubts have been started whether he was sole or joint author of this work. Richard, who had now joined him from Ireland, and William Burke were supposed to have lent their aid, though the former was not a literary man, the latter very little so; and his assistance, if any, no more than that of amanuensis or reading for references. Nearly all its pages bear traces of the superior workman—a little ambitious perhaps in style, aiming at terseness and brevity, the reflections original and just—such an outline in fact as no writer need hesitate to own. It is not however retained in his works. Shackleton, who had no other means of knowing the fact than from himself or the family, always stated it to be wholly his. The Editor of the edition printed in 1808, stated that he had seen the receipt for the copy money, amounting to fifty guineas, in Edmund's hand-writing, and I also have seen it since. Were there just cause for doubt, internal evidence to any diligent student of his writings would dispel it; for there are several passages similar to what were afterwards advanced in conversations with Dr. Johnson, and in discussions concerning our American Colonies, for which this book had unexpectedly prepared him. It has reached a seventh edition. Dugald Stewart termed it a masterly sketch; and the Abbé Raynal has profited by it in his history.

Under the pressure of temporary difficulty, he is said soon after this period, to have sold his books, the arms pasted in some of them, according to the story, having disclosed the secret. Hence it has since been alleged by political enemies that he was then frequently in distress. This was untrue. His father had been induced to increase his allowance. His father-in-law likewise contributed considerable aid. He put the press under contribution in an honourable way. And though these sources did not make up an imposing income, considering the society into which his talents had found ready entrance, they kept him free from want or discreditable shifts. His wife proved a prudent economist; and to several depreciatory statements of the sin of poverty, gave a prompt and decided negative, remarking that Mr. Burke had never himself taken the trouble to answer such stories.

CHAPTER III.

Abridgment of English History—Annual Register—Acquaintance with Dr. Johnson—Anecdote of a Canon of Lichfield—Mrs. Anne Pitt, Bishop Warburton, Hume, Lord Charlemont, Mr. Fitzherbert—Connexion with Mr. Gerard Hamilton—Letter to Mr. Flood—Documents connected with Burke's Pension—Anecdote of his humanity.

THE reputation of the *Essay on the Sublime and Beautiful* being quickly diffused through the literary world by the trading critics, as well as by the most eminent private judges of the day, among whom was David Hume and others, immediately stamped the author as a man of ingenuity and profound philosophical investigation.

In 1757 a new edition was called for. To this was prefixed, for the first time, the introductory chapter on Taste. A copy sent to his father, who had not been well pleased with his desertion of the law, produced in return a present of £100, as a testimony of paternal admiration. Another copy dispatched to his friend Shackleton, had on one of the blank leaves as expressive of his affectionate and unceasing regard—

*Accipe et hæc manuum tibi quæ monumenta meorum
Sint—et longum testentur amorem :*

All his future political works, especially the *Thoughts on the Discontents*, the *Reflections on the French Revolution*, the *Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs*, were transmitted to the same friend.

In a communication along with the *Essay*, dated from Battersea, August 10, 1757, he says, "This letter is accompanied by a little performance of mine, which I will not consider as ineffectual, if it contributes to your amusement. It lay by me for a good while, and I at last ventured it out. It has not been ill received, so far as a matter on so abstracted a subject meets with readers." He apologizes for a long silence by his "manner of life, chequered with various designs, sometimes in London, sometimes in remote parts of the country, sometimes in France, and shortly, please God, to be in America." This design before alluded to, it is scarcely necessary to say never took effect; but it is

illustrative of the rambling spirit often inherent in genius—which Goldsmith gratified and Burns wished to indulge.

In January, 1758, the domestic circle received an addition by the birth of that favourite son, who through life was beloved with even more than paternal fondness, and whose death, at the early age of 35, tended no doubt to hasten his own. Another son, named Christopher, died in infancy. The wants of an increasing family proved an irresistible stimulus to industry by all the means within his power, and his pen at this time was actively employed on a variety of subjects, some of which were never published.

One of those which remained in his own possession, was an "Essay towards an Abridgment of English History," which he had intimated to his Ballitore friends some time previously, it was his intention to write at length.

Eight sheets of this work were printed for Dodsley in 1757, but it was then discontinued, probably from hearing that Hume was engaged in treating of the same period of time, and perhaps from being unable to satisfy his own taste, which, on an historical subject, was fastidious. It displays however, a spirit of close research into the earlier history of our island, not exceeded, perhaps not equalled, by works of much greater pretensions, and with more antiquarian knowledge than might be expected. The portion devoted to the aboriginal people, to the Druids, to the settlement of the Saxons, and to the details relative to their laws and institutions, contains some information new to the general reader. On the whole it is perhaps the best abstract of that remote period we possess, without any admixture of the fabulous stories so common to the age; and to youth it will be found instructive. The style differs from that of the "European Settlements" in aiming at less of point and effect, but possesses simplicity and perspicuity. The characters of William the Conqueror, Henry II, and John are happily drawn, and the distinguishing circumstances of their reigns well selected for narration.

About this time English literature and English history became indebted to him in no ordinary degree by the establishment, in conjunction with Dodsley, of the *Annual Register*. Of the excellence and utility of this work, the plan of which was ingenious, while the execution insured great and unfading popularity, there never has been but one

opinion. Several of the first volumes passed to a fifth and sixth edition. It is the best, and the most comprehensive of all the periodical works, without any admixture of their trash, or their frequent tediousness of detail. Many of the sketches of contemporary history, written by himself or from his immediate dictation for about thirty years, are not merely valuable as coming from such a pen, but masterly in themselves; and in the estimation of many competent judges, are not likely to be improved by any future historian. They form, in fact, the chief sources whence all the principal histories of the last sixty years have been, and must continue to be, compiled, besides furnishing a variety of other useful and illustrative matter. The Annual Register for 1758, the first of the series, came out in June of the following year. Latterly a Mr. English and Dr. Walker (afterwards Bishop) King, the Editor of his works, wrote much of it under Burke's immediate direction.

This publication it was not necessary to claim. The fact of his participation in it has been often matter of doubt, though, from an attentive examination of circumstances minute in themselves, added to the suppression of his name on important occasions when extraordinary compliments were paid him both in and out of the House of Commons, I was fully satisfied of the affirmative, even before I received more positive information. The sum allowed for it by Dodsley was £100. Several receipts for the copy money in his own handwriting, are extant: the two following, for the year 1761, as being at hand, are given for the satisfaction of the reader:

"Received from Mr. Dodsley the sum of £50 on account of the Annual Register of 1761, this 28th March, 1761.

"EDM. BURKE."

"Received from Messrs. R. and T. Dodsley, the sum of £50 sterling, being in full for the Annual Register of 1761, this 30th day of March, 1762.

"EDM. BURKE."

Trifling causes are tritely said to be sometimes productive of important effects; and the composition of the Annual Register may have tended to influence the future career and fame of its author. By the investigations necessary for the historical article he became acquainted with the workings of practical politics, the secret springs by which they were put

in motion, and with some of the chief actors concerned. A careful writer of contemporary history for a series of years, cannot avoid almost, if he would, minutely scanning the political features of his own country and of Europe. He who has to speak during the session, and meditate during the recess—who is an actor on the great theatre of politics one half the year, and who must combine, analyze, and ponder upon the proceedings in order to write upon them, during the other, may not ultimately become a wise or great statesman; but there is no doubt that he goes the most effectual way towards it. To Mr. Burke it imparted knowledge and experience almost without the trouble of the search.

Early in 1759, we find him resident in Wimpole Street, the chief expenses of housekeeping being sustained by Dr. Nugent, whence he writes a most affectionate letter to his uncle Nagle, of Moneamyny, who had been an occasional mediator when disease or temper made his father unusually fractious. His companion, William Burke, is spoken of as proceeding to Ireland to his family, which appears to have resided near the same spot. He was no relative of Edmund, though occasionally called cousin; was always an inseparable friend with whom there were no reserves; who frequently resided in his house; who first introduced him to Lord Rockingham, to Lord Verney, who gave him his first seat in Parliament; to the Rev. Dr. Markham, then Head Master of Westminster School, afterwards Archbishop of York; and to many others. He is said to have been brought up at Westminster School.

An intimacy with the eminent Samuel Johnson had commenced some time previous to this, at the table of Garrick. On Christmas-day, 1758, Arthur Murphy dined with them, and was surprised to find the lexicographer submit to contradiction, India being the subject of discussion, from his companion twenty years younger than himself, which he would tolerate from no other person, whatever their talents or experience. A mutual admiration seemed to be the first feeling between them, which nothing afterwards served to diminish. It survived occasional sharp contentions for victory in conversation, the clashing of opposite political attachments and opinions, the almost irreconcilable feuds occasioned even among friends by the American contest,

and the devoted adherence of the orator to that party which the other in his strong manner denominated "Whig dogs."

Nothing contributed more to this esteem than Burke's faculty to excel in what his friend so eminently practised himself and loved in others, "good talk." The conversation of the former, if less striking than that of Johnson, was more conciliating; if less pungent, perhaps quite as entertaining; and in general society much more acceptable, because less overbearing. He communicated to his hearers scarcely less information without leaving behind it the sting of bitter sarcasm, or rude contempt, to rankle in the breast of a defeated antagonist. His manners were at the same time unassuming, distinguished more for suavity than that variety and vivacity which are sometimes the results of studied efforts at display.

No great man ever praised another more than Johnson praised Burke. Remarking in conversation that the fame of men was generally exaggerated in the world, somebody quoted Burke as an exception, and he instantly admitted it—"Yes; Burke is an extraordinary man; his stream of mind is perpetual." "Burke's talk," he said at another time, "is the ebullition of his mind; he does not talk from a desire of distinction, but because his mind is full." An argumentative contest with him, he seemed to think required such exertion on his own part, that when unwell at one time, and Burke's name was mentioned, he observed, "That fellow calls forth all my powers. Were I to see Burke now it would kill me." "Burke," added he again, "is the only man whose common conversation corresponds with the general fame which he has in the world. Take up whatever topic you please, he is ready to meet you." Often did he repeat, "That no man of sense could meet Mr. Burke by accident under a gateway to avoid a shower, without being convinced that he was the first man in England."

"Burke, Sir," said he at another time, "is such a man, that if you met him for the first time in the street where you were stopped by a drove of oxen, and you and he stepped aside for shelter but for five minutes, he'd talk to you in such a manner that when you parted you would say—this is an extraordinary man. Now you may be long enough with me without finding au thing extraordinary." He

allowed him to be a man of consummate if not unrivalled abilities very early in his parliamentary career; "with vast variety of knowledge, store of imagery, and copiousness of language." A frequent question to Murphy was, "Are you not proud of your countryman?" adding occasionally, "*Cum talis sit utinam noster esset!*" Of all the triumphs of Mr. Burke, it was perhaps the greatest to compel the admiration and personal love of a man whose mind was at once so capacious and so good, so powerful and so prejudiced, so celebrated and so deserving of celebrity.

What Johnson termed "Burke's affluence of conversation," and which he so highly prized and frequently talked of, often proved, as may be supposed, a source of mingled wonder and admiration to others. Few men of education but were impressed by it, and fewer still who had the opportunity of being in his society frequently, forgot the pleasure they had thus enjoyed. Many years after this period, Mr. Burke and a friend travelling through Lichfield for the first time, stopped to change horses, when being desirous to see more of a place which had given birth to his friend Johnson than a casual glance afforded, they strolled towards the cathedral. One of the Canons observing two respectable strangers making inquiries of the attendants, very politely came up to offer such explanations as they desired, when a few minutes only had elapsed before the feeling of superior information on such matters, with which he had met them, became changed to something like amazement at the splendour, depth, and variety of the conversation of one of the strangers. No matter what topic started, whether architecture, antiquities, ecclesiastical history, the revenues, persecutions, or the lives of the early ornaments and leading members of the church; he touched upon them all with the readiness and accuracy of a master. They had not long separated when some friends of the Canon met him hurrying along the street: "I have had," said he, "quite an adventure; I have been conversing for this half hour past with a man of the most extraordinary powers of mind and extent of information, which it has ever been my fortune to meet, and I am now going to the inn to ascertain if possible who this stranger is." There he learnt that his late companion who had just set off, was the celebrated Mr. Burke. He regretted much that he had not

known this sooner ; and his friends that they had not had an opportunity of knowing or seeing him at all. The circumstance formed an exemplification of Johnson's remark, that wherever met with, he was never to be mistaken for an ordinary man.

In speaking of Burke's social hours, the late Mr. Grattan not long before his death, observed to several friends that he was the greatest man in conversation he had met with. A nobleman who was present (Lord C.) inquired whether he did not think Curran on some occasions greater ? "No, my Lord," was the reply—"Curran indeed had much wit ; but Burke had wit too, and in addition to wit, boundless stores of wisdom and knowledge." The ease with which he introduced a subject, and the subtlety by which it was often carried on, were alluded to by Goldsmith, when he said in reply to an eulogy on Johnson's powers of conversation, "But is he like Burke, who winds into his subject like a serpent ?"

Among other eminent persons to whom the reputation of his philosophical essay and powers of conversation gave ready introduction, were Bishop Warburton, George Lord Lyttleton, Mr. Fitzherbert, member for Derby, Soame Jenyns, Mr. (afterwards Sir Joshua) Reynolds, Pulteney Earl of Bath, and perhaps a more remarkable person than either, Mrs. Anne Pitt, sister of the celebrated minister then at the head of the cabinet. This lady, Mr. Burke used to say, possessed not only great and agreeable talents, but was the most perfectly eloquent person he had ever heard speak. He lamented not having committed to paper one particular conversation in which the richness and variety of her discourse quite astonished him. She was accustomed to tell her great brother in their argumentative contests, that he knew nothing but Spenser's Fairy Queen. "And no matter how that was said," added Burke, in mentioning the circumstance, "but whoever relishes and reads Spenser as he ought to be read, will have a strong hold of the English language."

Of his acquaintance with Warburton which was but slight, he gave the following account in conversation with Mr. Wilkes, who had commenced a smart attack on the character of the bishop which Mr. Burke rather defended. "I was in a large private company in which it so happened that I did not hear the names of the persons who sat on either side of

me. One of them, however, attracted my attention in a very particular manner by the variety and depth of his conversation, carried on in an easy, good-humoured tone, and sometimes he was even amusing. From the latter circumstance—so contrary to what might be supposed from the violence of the controversialist—I must confess I was for some time in doubt; but at length exclaimed, ‘Sir, I think I cannot mistake; you must be the celebrated Dr. Warburton: *aut Erasmus aut Diabolus.*’ Warburton smiled, and we had much interesting conversation during the remainder of the evening.”

To Sir Joshua Reynolds and Wilkes he also related an anecdote of the Bishop, not a little indicative of the vanity and self-importance of that prelate, which had been told him by Blakey, the artist. That gentleman having been employed by Warburton to design the frontispiece to his edition of Pope, received directions to make him (Warburton) the principal and foreground figure in the composition, and the poet only secondary. These orders were of course obeyed, and in the piece the light proceeds upward from Warburton to Pope, in opposition to the usual rules of art. Wilkes wittily observed, “It was not merely on that, but on all occasions, that the bishop and the poet had been looking different ways.”

Mr. Fitzherbert was a man of a very different stamp, most amiable and agreeable, whom every one liked, and a great friend to authors and to letters. Mr. Burke, the Marquis of Rockingham, and others eminent in that day, lived on the most intimate footing with him.

Hume, whom he first met at the table of Garrick, was another acquaintance; and the historian found his opinions of so much consequence in London, that on the publication of Adam Smith’s *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, he thought it necessary to present him with a copy, writing his reasons to the author, April 1st, 1759.

“Wedderburn and I made presents of our copies to such of our acquaintance as we thought good judges, and proper to spread the reputation of the book. I sent one to the Duke of Argyle, Lord Lyttelton, Horace Walpole, Soame Jenyns, and Burke, an Irish gentleman, who wrote lately a very pretty treatise on the Sublime.” A considerable degree of intimacy arose from this civility. But on religion and

politics their sentiments were too diametrically opposed ever to approach to agreement. A difference of opinion respecting the Irish massacre of 1641 gave rise to some animated discussions between them; Burke maintaining, from documents existing in Dublin University, that the common accounts of that event were overcharged; Hume, that the statements in his history were correct. With Adam Smith himself, a greater degree of friendship prevailed. His work was termed in the Annual Register of that year "excellent; a dry abstract of which would convey no juster idea of it than the skeleton of a departed beauty would of her form when she was alive." And on subsequently coming to London, this philosopher paid a high compliment to the sound judgment of Mr. Burke as the only man he had met with who thought as he did on the chief topics of political economy,* without previous communication.

Mr. Burke was accustomed to tell his friends, speaking of Hume in familiar conversation, that in manners he was an easy unaffected man, previous to going to Paris as Secretary to Lord Hertford, the British Ambassador; but that the adulation and caresses of the female wits of that capital had been too powerful even for a *philosopher*. The result was, he returned a literary coxcomb.

He remarked likewise, that Hume had taken very little trouble with his history, particularly as to the earlier accounts of this island, having examined very few ancient records or writers, his aim being rather to make out a pleasing narrative than to ascertain facts. This he had discovered in consequence of having in some degree gone over the same ground himself. But in addition to this,

* It appears that Mr. Fox, by his own confession to Mr. C. Butler, of Lincoln's Inn, never read Adam Smith's great work on the Wealth of Nations; that "there was something in all these subjects which passed his comprehension; something so wide, that he could never embrace them himself, or find any one who did." This account of the science of Political Economy is at variance with all opinions of the best informed men, and in itself certainly inaccurate. It is another proof, however, of what the present writer has advanced in another part of this work, in sketching his character, namely, that he was impatient of study—of mental labour on subjects of abstract inquiry—of profiting as he might have done by the experience and intense meditation of others; consequently, that though always a great man, he did not sufficiently discipline his mind to become a truly wise one.

Hume himself, being pushed pretty hard in conversation, acknowledged to Boswell on one occasion, that he had not paid much attention to the older historians on controverted points. He had merely dipped into them; for little he thought was to be gained by minute examination.

The introduction to Dr. Markham now promised to be practically useful. Like most others, that gentleman felt the impress of Burke's genius and character; and seeing an opening to befriend him in the line of his commercial studies, addressed the following letter with that view to the Duchess of Queensbury.

“ Westminster, Sept. 25, 1759.

“ Madam,

“ I must entreat your Grace's pardon, for the trouble I am giving you. It is in behalf of a very deserving person with whom I have long had a close friendship. My acquaintance with your Grace's sentiments and feelings persuades me that I shall not want advocates when I have told you my story.

“ The consulship at Madrid has been vacant these eight months. Lord Bristol is writing pressing letters to have a Consul appointed. I am informed that the office lies so much out of the road of common applications that it has not yet been asked for; that it has been offered to some who have declined it; and that Mr. Pitt is actually at a loss for a proper person to appoint to it. This has encouraged my friend to think of it. It so happens that those who might serve him are mostly out of town. He expects recommendations from some whom he has writ to. The warm part that I take in all his interests obliges me to avail myself of the honour I have of being known to your Grace, and to beg as much of your assistance with Mr. Pitt as you think you can give me with propriety.

“ It is time I should say who my friend is. His name is Edmund Burke. As a literary man he may not be quite unknown to you. He is the author of a piece which imposed on the world as Lord Bolingbroke; called the ‘Advantages of Natural Society,’ and of a very ingenious book published last year, called ‘A Treatise on the Sublime and the Beautiful.’

“ I must further say of him, that his chief application has been to the knowledge of public business, and our com-

mercial interests; that he seems to have a most extensive knowledge, with extraordinary talents for business, and to want nothing but ground to stand upon to do his country very important services. Mr. Wood the under Secretary, has some knowledge of him, and will I am persuaded do ample justice to his abilities and character. As for myself as far as my testimony can serve him, I shall freely venture it on all occasions; as I value him not only for his learning and talents, but as being in all points of character a most amiable and most respectable man.

"I hope your Grace will forgive my taking up so much of your time. I am really so earnest in this gentleman's behalf that if I can be instrumental in helping him I shall think it one of the most fortunate events of my life. I beg leave to trouble you with my compliments to the Duke; and am with a fresh remembrance of your many kindnesses, your Grace's most obliged and most faithful servant,

"W. MARKHAM."

The Duchess transmitted this earnest and friendly appeal to the proper quarter, but as we know—and may perhaps rejoice—without beneficial result. Mr. Pitt was not fated to patronize Burke when unknown. He was as little disposed to give him office after complimenting him highly in the House of Commons, and when strongly requested so to do by his brother architect in building up the Ministry of 1766, the Duke of Grafton. And through the remainder of life seems to have entertained feelings of something like distaste or jealousy towards one who trod so closely on the heels of his own lead, abilities, and reputation. With as much pride as talents, he could admit no rival in eminence; and appeared even indisposed to tolerate a successor.

About this time he occasionally resided at Plaistow in Essex. A lady, then about fourteen years old, and residing in that neighbourhood, informs the writer that she perfectly remembers him there. His brother Richard, who found employment in the city, was with him frequently; and both were much noticed in the neighbourhood for agreeable and sociable qualities. Among their visitors, calculated to attract notice in the country, were several known as popular authors, and a few men of rank. In October 1759, a letter to his uncle announces Richard's departure on a mercantile

adventure to the West Indies. "Poor Dick is on the point of quitting us; however he has such advantageous prospects where he is going that I part from him with the less regret. One of the first merchants here, has taken him by the hand and enabled him to go off with a very valuable cargo."

William Burke was likewise a frequent visitor at Plaistow, and occasionally exercised himself in the press. On the publication in 1760 of Lord Bath's letter to two great men, meaning Mr. Pitt and the Duke of Newcastle, on the propriety of retaining Canada in preference to acquisitions in the West Indies in the proposed conditions of peace, this gentleman wrote a reply strongly recommending the retention of Guadalupe and other islands. To this Dr. Franklin thought it necessary to write a rejoinder, supporting the opinion of Lord Bath.* Another pamphlet said to have been corrected by Edmund, came from him in 1761 on the failure of the negotiation with Mr. Bussy, entitled "An Examination of the Commercial Principles of the late Negotiation." On this subject both were well qualified to form an opinion. Edmund with an eye to the future, had devoted much time to this study as one of the first considerations necessary for an English Statesman, and had succeeded in mastering its details.

Among his acquaintance was Lord Lyttelton and several others who had been either opposed to or connected with Sir Robert Walpole's administration. From these he seems to have formed rather a favourable opinion of that once unpopular man. He believed that he meant well and that his measures however opposed at the time, were best fitted for the solid interests of the country, the preservation of peace and the advancement of commerce. He it was who first told the story, since so often repeated, of the retired minister desiring his son to read to him; and when questioned as to the subject—should it be history? "No," replied the statesman, "there can be no truth in that." He admitted philosophical speculations, travels, and Pliny—

* "The opinion of the Burkes, after all, was most just. America with such a neighbour would have become more dependent on England. M. de Vergennes used to mention it as one of the greatest political errors that had ever been committed."—*Butler's Reminiscences*, p. 156.

but in his own special department all save simple results was but conjecture.

An invitation from the nobleman just mentioned is alluded to in a letter to Mr. Agmondisham Vesey then in Ireland, who was employed to soothe the fretful temper of his father, still dissatisfied that so promising a son should make such slow progress in worldly advancement. It dates from Sunning Hill, Sept. 10, 1760.

"I cannot express how much I am obliged to you for your kind and successful endeavours in my favour; of whatever advantage the remittance was, the assurance you give me of my father's reconciliation was a great deal more pleasing, and both indeed were rendered infinitely more agreeable to me by passing through your hands. I am sensible how very much I am indebted to your good nature upon this occasion. If one has but little merit, it is some consolation to have partial friends. Lord Lyttelton has been at Hagley for this month past, or near the matter; where for the first time he receives his friends in his new house. He was so obliging to invite me; I need not say that I am much concerned to find I shall not be able to obey his Lordship's commands, and that I must lose for this year at least the sight of that agreeable place, and the conversation of its agreeable owner. Mrs. Montagu is, I believe, at Tunbridge, for she told me on her leaving town that she intended to make a pretty long stay there. May I flatter myself with the hope of seeing you this winter in London? I cannot so easily forget the evenings I have passed not to be most desirous of renewing them."

He had removed now from Wimpole to Queen Anne Street, next door to Mr. Fitzherbert. In the Annual Register he found amusement in noticing some of the first books of the day, such as Hume and Robertson's histories, Leland's—an old college friend—Philip of Macedon, Walpole's Royal and Noble Authors, and many more of superior merit. Among others was Johnson's *Rasselas*, on which he first made the observation: "The instruction which is found in works of this kind when they convey any instruction at all is not the predominant part, but arises accidentally in the course of a story planned only to please. But in this novel the moral is the principal object, and the story is a mere vehicle to convey the instruction."

He was at the same time laying the groundwork for that introduction into public life on which he had early cast his eye. His predilections were chiefly political. Much of his studies and writings tended to that point. The society with which he mixed served to confirm it. And the possession of an able pen, a clear head, and latent confidence in his own general powers, increased a prepossession which promised the readiest avenue to fame and station. A slender opening into that department at length seemed to offer.

Among the warmest admirers of his talents was his countryman the amiable and patriotic Lord Charlemont. A peer without undue pride, a man of fashion without foppery, a good scholar though never at a public school or university, a voluminous writer without courting the honours of the press, and a patriot with little of the leaven of faction, he commanded general esteem and respect. Born to a title and competent fortune, he laid his country under no contribution for his services, and on most occasions gave his vote to the ministry or to the opposition, as the public interest seemed to require. He lived chiefly in Ireland, not as a matter of preference but from a sense of duty to the country whence he derived his birth, his title, and his income. He wielded many years after this time a tremendous military engine, the Irish volunteers, at a moment of strong national excitement and difficulty, in a manner the most prudent and able. A patron and friend of literature, he sought and valued the society of its most eminent professors. No man was more popular in his own country, or seemed better to approach the model of what a nobleman should be in all countries.

Mr. Burke said many years afterwards, "Lord Charlemont is a man of such polished manners, of a mind so truly adorned and disposed to the adoption of whatever is excellent and praiseworthy, that to see and converse with him would alone induce me, or might induce any one who relished such qualities, to pay a visit to Dublin."

His weaknesses were few, and would not be worth enumerating, had not some of them led, almost in the last stage of life, to an interruption of correspondence with his then celebrated friend. He thought, it seems, that public virtue centred chiefly in the Whigs. He had too strong a jealousy of the Roman Catholics. He considered the revo-

lution in France as the dawn of rational liberty. He leaned to the question of parliamentary reform in Ireland at a moment when he saw and acknowledged that its chief supporters entertained, as the subsequent rebellion proved, more dangerous designs. And he was too much of an Irishman in common with other mistaken Irishmen to look on the contemplated union with England otherwise than as the ruin of his country. By this distinguished character Mr. Burke was introduced in 1759 to another of not less notoriety. This was Mr. William Gerard (commonly called Single-speech) Hamilton, a gentleman who, after a few able efforts in the House of Commons, gained more celebrity afterwards by keeping his tongue still, than many others by the most determined volubility.

The son of a lawyer, grounded in the same profession himself, and bred at Oriel College, Oxford, he in May 1754, became transplanted from Lincoln's Inn to the House of Commons as member for Petersfield. A brilliant speech, in about eighteen months, followed by one or two others of less interest, made him a Lord of Trade in 1756, of which board Lord Halifax was then president. With that nobleman, created Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, he proceeded thither in 1761 as chief secretary, shone off vividly on two or three occasions, returned to England in about three years, and, though a senator for the remainder of his life, above thirty sessions, his lips within the House were ever after sealed, as is said, to public discussion. While he declined however to give the country his advice, he did not hesitate to take its money, having enjoyed the sinecure of Chancellor of the Irish Exchequer from 1763 to 1784, when it was resigned, though not without an equivalent, to Mr. Foster.

His talents were reckoned of the first class, his understanding clear, his judgment sound, particularly as his friends said, on the first view of a question before his ingenuity had time to fritter it away in useless subtleties and refinements to which he was prone. His wit was pointed, his oratory epigrammatic and antithetical, his conversation easy and agreeable. In composition he was laboriously affected, being a literary fop of the most determined cast; for a stop omitted, a sentence not fully turned, or a word that upon reflection could be amended, were sufficient to occasion the recall of a note to a familiar acquaintance. What

he uttered in public partook of the same labour. He was one of the few members of either House who wrote, got by heart, and rehearsed his speeches in private, previous to their delivery in the House of Commons. One of these, three hours in length, Lord Charlemont knew to have been repeated three times before a friend.

He possessed, however, a very useful faculty,—a clear insight into character, which after the first introduction, made him cultivate the acquaintance of Burke, with a desire of attaching him to his own service. The appointment to Ireland opportunely offered for this purpose. It was settled that he should accompany him as a friend, partly perhaps in the situation of private secretary, in which, as being perfectly conversant with the local interests, parties, and public characters of the country, his services promised to be of high value.

In March, 1761, the appointments of Lord Halifax and his friends were arranged, though the chief persons did not reach the seat of government until the ensuing October. Burke preceded them, having arrived towards the end of August. What share he had in giving advice, cannot now be known. He himself it will be seen, speaks of “a long and laborious attendance;” but whatever his suggestions might have been, Hamilton, as chief, would naturally take the credit to himself. High political authority intimately conversant with the politics and private history of Ireland at this period, suggests to me that his principal employment was, as deputy of Hamilton, to manage the Irish House of Commons. For this belief there is some ground in the friendship shown him by Primate Stone, then one of the most active “Undertakers,” as they were termed, for ruling that country; and from an expression in a letter written at this time, or shortly afterwards and still in existence by a man in power in Dublin, which in allusion to Burke’s activity, coarsely calls him “Hamilton’s jackal.”

Little doubt exists that his services were put in requisition on the chief measures brought forward or recommended by government. Of one of these he is believed to have been the author in conjunction with Lord Kenmare; namely, the project for raising during a period of great distress almost amounting to famine among the peasantry of the west of Ireland, six regiments of Roman Catholics officered

by persons of the same persuasion, for the service of Portugal. This scheme failed through the adverse influence of the great landed proprietors in that quarter of the country. One of his literary productions, or rather state-papers, which at a late period of life was acknowledged either by himself or by Hamilton it is not clearly remembered which, was the reply of Lord Halifax to the Irish parliament refusing an augmentation voted almost unanimously, 26th Feb. 1762, of £4000 per annum to his salary. Of the consideration which he enjoyed and the esteem his talents commanded, no better proof need be afforded than the intimate friendships formed, or renewed, with Mr. Henry Flood, Sir Hercules Langrishe, Mr. Monk Mason, Mr. Pery, afterward Speaker of the Irish House of Commons and ultimately created a peer, besides the friendship of the Primate and others, men of leading talents and influence in both Houses of Parliament.

The opportunity afforded by this trip of renewing literary, as well as political connexions which had been interrupted by his stay in England, was not neglected. With Dr. Thomas Wilson, Senior Fellow of the University, Dr. Blundell, Dr. Kearney, and others formerly the directors or partners of his studies, it is recorded that he spent an evening or two every week, conversing chiefly on topics connected with letters. Discussing the merits of the Latin historians one evening, the former gentleman is said to have proposed to join him in translating Livy, but this, Mr. Burke, who probably found he had quite business enough on his hands in the bustle of politics and his other literary occupations, declined. "Good translators," he said, "of Latin authors are rare; and yet, unlike most other rarities, they are not valued as they deserve." He now prompted Leland to write his Irish history.

In November 1761 he lost his father.* Two months previously he had visited his old and esteemed friends at Ballitore. Mr. and Mrs. Shackleton in return, calling at his

* Some remarks of General Conway, March, 1771, on frequent divisions of the House, and a foolish speech of Mr. George Onslow, that being descended from Speakers he ought best to know its forms, with some allusions which Burke, who shunned pretence, thought personal, drew from him the manly admission—"My father left me nothing in the world but good principles, good instruction, good example, which I have not departed from."

apartments at Dublin Castle, surprised him on the carpet busily occupied in romping with his two boys, and used to mention the affectionate interest he took in their infantile amusements as a proof of an amiable, joined to what the world afterward knew to be a great mind. To a late period of life he delighted in children, amusing himself with what he called his "men in miniature," frequently participating in their juvenile sports, and perhaps at the same moment instructing their grandfathers, by turning from one to the other to throw out some forcible remark upon human nature, induced by the scenes which their little habits, passions, and contentions afforded. It was no unfrequent thing to see him spinning a top or a teetotum with the boys who occasionally visited at Beaconsfield; and the following is an instance of a similar playful spirit.

A gentleman well known in the literary and political world, who when young amused himself by taking long walks in the vicinity of London, once directed his steps towards Harrow about the time of the coalition ministry, when on a green in front of a small cottage, he espied an assemblage of such men as are rarely seen together. Mr. Burke, Mr. Fox, Mr. Sheridan (the owner of the cottage), Lord John Townshend, Lord William Russell, and four or five others the most eminent of the Whig party, were diverting themselves after what was then customary, an early dinner. The employment of the former was the most conspicuous; it consisted in rapidly wheeling a boy (the late Mr. Thomas Sheridan) round the sward in a child's hand-chaise, with an alertness and vivacity that indicated an almost equal enjoyment in the sport with his young companion, who in fact was so much pleased with his adult play-fellow, that he would not let him desist, nor did the orator seem much to desire it, till a summons to horse announced the separation of the party.

How long he remained in Dublin does not exactly appear. In March 1763 when in Queen Anne Street, he received the reward of his services in his native country in a pension of £300 per annum, on the Irish establishment. To his friends in Ballitore he wrote in April announcing the grant. He mentions likewise Richard's good fortune in being appointed collector in Grenada. Lord Northumberland he believes is nominated Lord-Lieutenant; and adds that if

Mr. Hamilton be the new Secretary, he may visit Ireland again in the winter. "I am indebted to him and the Lord Primate for what I have already got."

A curious error occurred in the grant of this pension, as appears by the following extract of a letter from Mr. Secretary Hamilton to Sir Robert Wilmot, dated April 14, 1763, for which, and a subsequent document, I am indebted to a gentleman of high political rank and talents.* "There is a mistake in one of the pensions which I desire may be rectified at any hazard, as I was the occasion of it. It is not William Birt who is to have a pension of £300 per annum upon the Primate's list, but Edmund Burke."

The boon, commencing thus somewhat inauspiciously was as inauspiciously terminated, having been enjoyed for twelve months only, when from the unreasonable claims made upon his gratitude, it was thrown up with indignation. The particulars as related by himself in May 1765, shortly after the transaction in a letter to Mr. Henry Flood, are too honourable to the writer and too interesting to the reader to be given in other than his own words. They exhibit with what indifference a high spirit relinquished a pecuniary favour, unconditionally granted, when its continued acceptance could be construed, however illiberally, and without the least anticipation of such a demand, into an obligation to future and constant servitude.

"I thank you for your kind and most obliging letters; you are a person whose good offices are not snares, and to whom one may venture to be obliged without danger to his honour. As I depend upon your sincerity, so shall I most certainly call upon your friendship, if I should have any thing to do in Ireland; this however is not the case at present, at least in any way in which your interposition may be employed with a proper attention to yourself; a point which I shall always very tenderly consider in any application I make to my friends.

"It is very true that there is an eternal rupture between me and Hamilton, which was on my side neither sought nor provoked; for though his conduct in public affairs has been for a long time directly contrary to my opinions, very reproachful to himself, and extremely disgusting to me; and

though in private he has not justly fulfilled one of his engagements to me, yet I was so uneasy and awkward at coming to a breach, where I had once a close and intimate friendship, that I continued with a kind of desperate fidelity to adhere to his cause and person; and when I found him greatly disposed to quarrel with me, I used such submissive measures as I never before could prevail upon myself to use to any man.

“The occasion of our difference was not any act whatsoever on my part; it was entirely on his, by a voluntary but most insolent and intolerable demand, amounting to no less than a claim of servitude during the whole course of my life, without leaving me at any time a power either of getting forward with honour, or of retiring with tranquillity. This was really and truly the substance of his demand upon me, to which I need not tell you I refused with some degree of indignation to submit. On this we ceased to see each other, or to correspond a good while before you left London. He then commenced, through the intervention of others, a negotiation with me, in which he showed as much of meanness in his proposals as he had done of arrogance in his demands: but as all these proposals were vitiated by the taint of that servitude with which they were all mixed, his negotiation came to nothing.

“He grounded these monstrous claims (such as never were before heard of in this country) on that pension which he had procured for me through Colonel Cunningham, the late Primate, and Lord Halifax, for through all that series of persons this paltry business was contrived to pass. Now, though I was sensible that I owed this pension to the good will of the Primate in a great degree, and though if it had come from Hamilton’s pocket, instead of being derived from the Irish treasury, I had earned it by a long and laborious attendance, and might in any other than that unfortunate connexion have got a much better thing; yet to get rid of him completely, and not to carry a memorial of such a person about me, I offered to transmit it to his attorney in trust for him. This offer he thought proper to accept. I beg pardon, my dear Flood, for troubling you so long on a subject which ought not to employ a moment of your thoughts, and never shall again employ a moment of mine.”

Several letters between Burke and Hamilton on this

subject appear in the correspondence of the former, published since the third edition of this work, but throw no new light on the details.* Others were addressed by the offended party to Dublin friends known to both, particularly Mr. Hely Hutchinson and Mr. Monck Mason. In these he accuses Hamilton of shuffling, of falsifying his promises, of wishing to tie him down for life in his service an unconditional slave, in terms of indignation as strong as language can supply. The claim made upon him seems certainly of an extraordinary kind; and he states it fully to all his friends. Yet his previous services had been long and unremitting—"Six of the best years of my life he took me from every pursuit of literary reputation, or of the improvement of my fortune. In that time he made his own fortune (a very great one), and he has also taken to himself the very little one which I had made." Other references occur of the same tenor, to the extent and value of his services. Their exact nature does not appear; but Hamilton it is clear, proceeded to every extremity in order to ensure their continuance. As he held a seat at the Board of Trade previous to going to Ireland, and Burke's studies had for some time taken that turn, he probably profited by them to the increase of his reputation. One general allusion occurs in the first letter—"You may recollect," writes Burke, "when you did me the honour to take me *as a companion in your studies*, you found me with the little work we spoke of last Tuesday as a sort of rent-charge on my thoughts." It is possible that Hamilton may have been ambitious of literary fame, and aimed at securing such an efficient assistant. On their final rupture Burke writes,—“I shall in half an hour send all your books which I can just now find, in print or *manuscript*, except the loose pamphlets; the latter shall be sent as soon as possible; and if any should remain of the *former*, I shall faithfully return as I find them.” His own work alluded to is not ascertained, but may have been the fragment on the history of England.

This quarrel excited considerable notice among people in power in Dublin, as appears by a letter from Mr. Secretary Waite to Sir Robert Wilmot. For this also the writer is indebted to Mr. Croker, whose researches on contemporary history have so often instructed the public.

* Edited by Earl Fitzwilliam and Sir Richard Bourke, K.C.B.

“ Dublin Castle, 9th May, 1765.

“ We are told here that Mr. Secretary Hamilton and *his genius* Mr. Bourke have quarrelled to such a degree that Mr. Bourke has actually given up his pension of £300 per annum rather than continue obliged to him, and that it is assigned over to a Mr. Jephson who lives with Mr. Hamilton. Is this true?”

That Mr. Robert Jephson, afterwards author of the tragedy of Braganza and other works, was his successor in the pension, was true. It appears by the following document to have been paid for eighteen months afterwards though not to Mr. Burke; and did not cease till after he was connected with office, either from Hamilton thinking he could no longer retain it, with decency under the eye of the person to whom it was properly due, or from the latter procuring the Marquis of Rockingham preemptorily to strike it out of the list—

“ Vice Treasurer’s Office, Dublin, 25th Aug. 1824.

“ The books of this department have been minutely examined, and it appears that by the king’s letter, dated 19th April, 1763, there was granted to Edmund Burke, Esq. during pleasure, a pension of £300 a year from 25th March, 1763, which he assigned on the 10th April, 1764, to Matthew Colthurst* of Chancery-lane, county of Middlesex. No other assignment appears, nor do any grounds for granting even appear in his Majesty’s letters. On the 16th December, 1765, it ceased, pursuant to his Majesty’s letter of that date, and Lord Lieutenant’s warrant thereon, dated 13th January, 1766.”

The conduct of Mr. Burke in this transaction must be considered magnanimous by carrying the point of honour, or as he emphatically termed it, “desperate fidelity,” so far, that the story though so well calculated to tell to his own advantage, is now for the first time made generally known. Yet even this honourable reserve was tortured into a handle for party misrepresentation. It was once circulated, that the pension, thus surrendered from the most upright and independent motives, was sold by him for a sum of money to pay his debts.

The real grounds of the quarrel verify an observation of

* Mr. Hamilton’s attorney.

the late Bishop O'Beirne, who, when a gentleman of some political consideration in Ireland remarked that though he himself had perfect confidence in Burke's strict principle and honour upon all occasions, yet others, who did not know him so well, were less inclined to give him credit for some unexplained parts of his conduct: "Believe me," said the Bishop, "if there be an obscure point in the life or conduct of Edmund Burke, the moment the explanation arrives, it will be found to redound to his honour."

The conclusion of the letter to Flood, as it exhibits the near view of public affairs which he enjoyed even at this time and relates some curious particulars of the ministry, is worthy of preservation—

"To your inquiries concerning some propositions in a certain assembly, of a nature injurious to Ireland, since your departure. I know nothing of that kind, except one attempt made by a Mr. Shiffner, to lessen the number of the ports of entry in Britain and Ireland, allowed for the trade of wool and woollen yarn of the growth of the latter country. This attempt was grounded on the decrease of the import of those commodities from Ireland, which they rashly attributed to the great facility of the illicit transport of wool from Ireland to France, by the indulgence of a number of ports. This idea, founded in an ignorance of the nature of the Irish trade had weight with some persons, but the decreased import of Irish wool and yarn being accounted for upon true and rational principles in a short memorial delivered to Mr. Townshend, he saw at once into it with his usual sagacity; and he has silenced the complaints at least for this session. Nothing else was done or meant that I could discover, though I have not been inattentive; and I am not without good hopes that the menaces in the beginning of the session will end as they began, only in idle and imprudent words. At least there is a strong probability that new men will come in, and not improbably with new ideas.

"At this very instant, the causes productive of such a change are strongly at work. The Regency Bill has shown such want of concert and want of capacity in the ministers, such an inattention to the honour of the Crown, if not such a design *against* it, such imposition and surprise upon the King, and such a misrepresentation of the disposition of Parliament to the Sovereign, that there is no doubt that

there is a fixed resolution to get rid of them all (unless perhaps of Grenville); but principally of the Duke of Bedford; so that you will have much more reason to be surprised to find the ministry standing by the end of next week, than to hear of their entire removal. Nothing but an intractable temper in your friend Pitt can prevent a most admirable and lasting system from being put together, and this crisis will shew whether pride or patriotism be predominant in his character; for you may be assured, he has it now in his power to come into the service of his country upon any plan of politics he may choose to dictate, with great and honourable terms to himself and to every friend he has in the world, and with such a strength of power as will be equal to every thing, but absolute despotism over the king and kingdom. A few days will show whether he will take this part, or that of continuing on his back at Hayes talking fustian, excluded from all ministerial and incapable of all parliamentary service. For his gout is worse than ever, but his pride may disable him more than his gout. These matters so fill our imaginations here, that with our mob of 6 or 7000 weavers, who pursue the Ministry and do not leave them quiet or safe in their own houses, we have little to think of other things.

"I will send you the new edition of Swift's posthumous works. I doubt you can hardly read this hand; but it is very late. Mrs. Burke has been ill and recovers but slowly; she desires her respects to you and Lady Frances. Iulus is much obliged to you. Will. Bourke always remembers you with affection.

"Pray remember me to Langrishe, and to Leland and Bowden. Dr. Nugent desires his compliments to you in the strongest manner; he has conceived a very high esteem for you."

Previous to this rupture with Hamilton, in the autumn of 1763 and in the spring of 1764, Mr. Burke visited Dublin again, on some expectations said to have been held out by the Earl of Northumberland, then Lord Lieutenant; and with Mrs. Burke and his son made a short stay at Ballitore, returning to Queen Anne Street in June.

A year or two before this period a trifling circumstance, occurring in a public exhibition, impressed those who were present and knew him (among whom was the relator of the

following anecdote) with a feeling of his humanity which on subsequent occasions was often recalled to mind, and mentioned to his honour.

“In the year 1762, one Johnson, an Irishman by birth, exhibited many feats of activity in horsemanship, and was, I believe, the first public performer in that line in and about London. He was an active, clever fellow in his way, and seemed to me to be patronized by Mr. Burke, then said to be a student of the Middle Temple, and by his friend Mr. Netterville, and Mr. Nugent the merchant; for I was seldom there without seeing this party, amongst whom Richard Burke sometimes appeared.

“The great favourite of the company was a beautiful black horse. Whenever Johnson wanted him, he gave three smacks of his whip, and the docile creature came out of his stable and stood by his side; he then ran about the ring until another sound of the whip brought him again to his master. In one unlucky round he disobeyed, and his master's whip often sounded in vain. When at length he stopped, Johnson by a violent blow between the ears, felled him to the ground, and the creature lay for some minutes as if expiring. Mr. Burke broke from the circle, and running directly up to Johnson, vehemently exclaimed, ‘You scoundrel! I have a mind to knock you down!’ and he would I believe have done so, if Mr. Netterville had not reached him and interposed. Johnson had then leisure to make what apology he pleased, and thus the matter ended;—but I shall never forget the impression of awe and admiration made upon myself and others by the solemn passion with which Mr. Burke uttered this otherwise coarse reproof. Though the circle was immediately broken, all kept a respectful distance; perhaps this was the first time he had ever produced an effect upon an audience. I must be excused for comparing great things with small; but when I first heard him in the House of Commons pouring out a torrent of indignation against cruelty and corruption, I was reminded, after an interval of many years, of the champion of the poor black horse.”

While in Dublin towards the end of 1763, he received a letter from Dr. Sleight, of Cork, recommending to his attention a friendless son of genius, who had proceeded thence to the metropolis to exhibit a picture, of which in his native

city no sufficient judgment could be formed. This was Barry the celebrated painter. Mr. Burke saw him frequently, examined and praised his picture, inquired into his views and future prospects, and desirous to test his general powers of mind, broached an argument upon a question of taste rather ingenious than solid, which the other boldly opposed; quoting in support of his opinion and ignorant as it seemed of the real author, a passage from the *Essay on the Sublime and Beautiful*. Edmund affecting to contend that this was poor authority, considerable discussion ensued, until at length Barry becoming warm, his new acquaintance confessed himself to be the writer, when the painter, springing from his seat, ran and embraced him. As an unequivocal proof of admiration of the volume in dispute, he produced a copy of it transcribed by his own hand.

The kindness of the patron did not stop at mere acquaintance and advice; for though possessing but slender means himself and with quite sufficient claims upon them, he had too much goodness of heart, and too sincere sympathy with unfriended talents, to see them sink into hopeless neglect and poverty without at least giving them a chance for reward. No opportunities for improvement existing in Dublin, he offered the artist a passage to England with Mr. Richard Burke, just then returned from the West Indies, received him at his house in Queen Anne Street, introduced him to the principal artists, and procured employment for him to copy pictures under Athenian Stuart, until a favourable change in his own circumstances enabled him to do still more.

Whenever Parliament was sitting, it is recorded he was a frequent attendant in the gallery, storing up those practical observations on public business and debate, soon to be drawn forth for active use. Most of his hours of study, as he said afterwards, were devoted to a minute acquaintance with the principles and workings of the British Constitution. The next object in his eyes was our commerce. These alone, he said, had made us what we were—a free and a great nation; and these he had spared no time, no labour, no sacrifice, thoroughly to understand; and for these alone had well earned his subsequent pension before he put his foot in the House of Commons. It is certain that he was the first who rendered the principles and many of the details of commerce

generally intelligible in that assembly. Dr. Johnson was proud to be told a few years afterwards, by an excellent judge of the matter, the "all knowing Jackson," as he was called, that there was more good sense about trade in the account of his journey to the Western Islands of Scotland, than would be heard for a whole year in Parliament, except from Burke.

In the discussions to which the Peace and the proceedings of the Grenville Ministry gave rise, he is said to have taken a considerable share. Some letters which excited considerable notice, under the signature of Anti-Sejanus, were attributed to his pen. This was certainly untrue. They were not his politics. In all the Annual Registers up to the period of his connexion with the Rockingham Administration he preserves a rigid impartiality, strongly reprobating the licentiousness of the press on both sides, and complaining (1764) that "character no longer depended on the tenor of a man's life and actions; it was entirely determined by the party he had taken."

Previous to this time, it has been said that he had disciplined himself in public speaking at the famous debating society, known by the name of the "Robin Hood." Such was then the custom among law-students and others intended for public life; and a story is told of the future orator having commonly to encounter an opponent whom nobody else could overcome or at least silence. This person was discovered to be a baker, whom Goldsmith who had heard him several times speak, once characterized as being "meant by nature for a Lord Chancellor." Mr. Murphy had some faint recollection of the anecdote. Tradesmen form no inconsiderable part of such assemblies; and as unlettered minds often think originally though crudely, it may not be useless to one better informed thus to seek exercise for its powers by beating down their errors. A circumstance almost precisely similar occurred to the celebrated John Philpot Curran when keeping his terms in London, and is related in his memoirs.

A suggestion of Mr. Reynolds to Burke, between whom a close friendship existed, cemented by admiration of each other's talents and private virtues, gave birth in 1764 to the famous Literary Club, in imitation of the social meetings of the wits of the preceding age. No class of

persons perhaps require them more than those who, having little to enliven the solitary drudgery of the day, gladly fly to familiar converse in the evening with congenial minds. Here the wise may mix with the wise, not indeed to preach up wisdom, but to forget the follies of others in displaying some of their own. Here also were performed, without venting that undue acrimony and unmeasured abuse common to the criticism of our day, those offices to literature now undertaken by the leading reviews in settling the claims of new books and authors. Literary enmities were then less general perhaps in consequence of men of jarring opinions and principles being brought more frequently together, and who found in the amenities of social intercourse something to soften the asperities of controversy. Authors at present, associate more with the world and less with each other; but it may be doubted whether they or the public have gained by the exchange.

Among those of the club whom Mr. Burke much esteemed, and whose genius and foibles were alternately sources of admiration and amusement, was Goldsmith. They had entered Trinity College within two months of each other; the former as related, in April, the latter in June, 1744; and though not then particularly acquainted, remembered each other afterwards as being known in the University for the possession of talents, rather than for their exercise. Occasional meetings at Dodsley's renewed the acquaintance, about 1758; and in the Annual Register for the following year, his *Inquiry into the Present State of Polite Learning in Europe*, is noticed with approbation, as were all his subsequent writings.

With the exception of a little vanity, and a little jealousy, which however from the manner they were shown excited rather laughter than anger, it was difficult to know Goldsmith without liking him, even if the warm regards of Burke, Johnson, and Reynolds were not alone a sufficient stamp of the sterling value of any man. Humane in disposition, generous to imprudence, careless of his own interests, a chaste and elegant writer who advocated the interests of religion and morals, and who combined with his exhortations as much of practical benevolence as falls to the lot of most men, he was worthy of such friends; at once a rival of their fame and of their virtues. An author by profession, he was

characterized by the imprudences often attendant upon genius. He thought not of the morrow. The "heaviest of metals" was so light in his estimation as to be carelessly parted with though laboriously earned. He and poverty had been so long acquainted that even when an opportunity offered for casting her off by the success of his pen, they knew not how to separate. He lived in pecuniary difficulties, and he died so.

During the term of his literary life which comprised no more than sixteen years, he wrote much and always well, but chiefly of that class of productions intended rather as sacrifices to necessity than to inclination. There is enough indeed left behind for fame, but much less than for our national glory and individual pleasure, every reader of taste desires. His plays are good; his poems, novels, and essays, admirable; his histories, as far as they go, infinitely superior to any others of the same abbreviated description. Some persons on account of the small number of his original works, have been inclined to attribute to him poverty of genius, forgetting his daily wants and the shortness of his career; but, in fact no writer of the age displayed more fertility and variety on any subject to which he chose to apply the powers of his mind. And it should also be remembered that he had constantly to write for present bread before he could think of contingent reputation; for, alas! the brain with all its noble and delightful thoughts and aspirations must still seek support from more grovelling organs of the frame. He died too, at 46, an age at which Johnson was little more than beginning to become known to the public, and after which that great writer completed several of those works which render him the pride of our nation. Had poor Goldsmith lived to attain an equally venerable term of years, there is no doubt, both from his necessities and thirst for distinction, that the national literature would have been enriched much more than it is, by the labours of his pen. This sketch might be extended had I not endeavoured to render him due honour elsewhere.*

* Life of Goldsmith, 2 vols. 8vo. 1837.

CHAPTER IV.

Appointed Private Secretary to the Marquis of Rockingham—Anecdote of the Duke of Newcastle—Mr. Burke's account of the state of Parties and Politics—Success in Parliament—Dismissal of the Ministry—Short Account of a short Administration—Visit to Ireland—Anecdotes—His Memory—Gregories—Pamphlet in reply to Mr. Grenville—Junius.

THE moment at length arrived when the subject of our notice gained that opening into public life, which nature and the train of his studies had so eminently qualified him to fill.

Mr. George Grenville's Administration had become unpopular by the proceedings against Mr. Wilkes, by the means resorted to for increasing the revenue, and by the supposed secret influence of Lord Bute, when the omission of the Princess Dowager of Wales's name in the Regency Bill then framed on the first paroxysm of that malady which subsequently so much afflicted the King, threw it out, as Burke, in the letter to Mr. Flood had clearly predicted two months before. Mr. Pitt was then applied to in vain; that imperious, though able minister, scarcely permitting his Majesty to have a voice in the formation of his own councils. The Duke of Cumberland, esteemed for good sense and popular deportment, now undertook the formation of a ministry; and by his express command and through him by desire of the King, a division of the Whigs entered into office under the Marquis of Rockingham.

The body among whom this nobleman now took the lead, though comprising the chief of the aristocracy of the country, presented at this moment and for several years afterwards, an unstable and heterogeneous assemblage. It was split into as many sections as a marching regiment on the parade; but with no other principle of a military body, exhibited only the irregular energy when it showed any energy at all, of an undisciplined mob; a mass of moral quicksilver without any point of adhesion; the cuttings and parings of all opinions jumbled into a crude, vacillating, unintelligible whiggism. Many of the members were in fact a kind of neutral-ground men, so wavering, so undecided, so uncertain in their support, as almost to justify the wish of Mr. Burke that he "hoped to God the race was extinct."

The Marquis, the Duke of Newcastle, and their friends forming the main division of the party, deemed themselves sound Whigs. The Duke of Bedford professed to be a Whig. The Duke of Grafton called himself a Whig. Mr. George Grenville thought himself a Whig. And Mr. Pitt, if he hung aloof from the name of Whig was so near to it in substance, that few but himself could distinguish the difference. Each of these had various shades of opinion, and some of their followers as it proved, no opinions at all; while several along with Charles Townshend, seemed so eager for place or unsteady in principle, as to be ready upon the summons, to adopt or surrender any opinions whatever. Statesmen out of office are often in the unlucky predicament of being unable to explain to the satisfaction of the people, their hair-breadth differences of sentiment with those who are in; and when they happen to succeed, do not always get as much credit as they expect for sincerity in their views.

Lord Rockingham doomed to be a leader of short-lived administrations, commanded general respect for the qualities of his heart and manners. He was not a great man. He was not a debater. He was scrupulous in mere party contests only, perhaps because he already enjoyed the chief fruits of political greatness—almost the highest rank and the amplest fortune. But were there an order of statesmen set apart from the general class, distinguished for clear views and unwavering integrity, for a sound understanding and an upright mind, who aimed at no brilliancy, and were superior to all duplicity or trick, even to promote a favourite purpose, he would have stood at the head of the list. His knowledge and acquirements were all substantial. He had much for use, though but little for display. His station in life enabling him to take an enlarged view of the political horizon, he observed keenly and expressed himself in public when he ventured to address the House, wisely and temperately. Never touching on the extremes of timidity or rashness, he possessed the useful art of knowing exactly how far to go on party occasions, and where to stop. Whoever had him for an opponent had an honourable one, whom if he could not convince, he could scarcely disesteem; and as a minister, none could have more unequivocally at heart the good of his country.

Through the recommendation of friends, particularly Mr.

William Burke, as Edmund more than once said, he received the appointment of private secretary to that nobleman, July 17, 1765, just a week after the latter had been nominated to the head of the Treasury. "The British dominions," says a writer who knew most of the political characters of the time, "did not furnish a more able and fit person for that important and confidential situation; the only man since the days of Cicero who has united the talents of speaking and writing with irresistible force and elegance."

His own account of this event given nine years afterward, was stated with much modesty. "In the year sixty-five, being in a very private station, far enough from any line of business, and not having the honour of a seat in this House, it was my fortune, unknowing and unknown to the then ministry, by the intervention of a common friend, to become connected with a very noble person, and at the head of the Treasury department. It was indeed in a situation of little rank and no consequence, suitable to the mediocrity of my talents and pretensions. But a situation near enough to see as well as others what was going on; and I did see in that noble person such sound principles, such an enlargement of mind, such clear and sagacious sense, and such unshaken fortitude, as have bound me, as well as others much better than me, by an inviolable attachment to him from that time forward."

By those who knew him intimately he was undoubtedly deemed a great acquisition to the ministry. Of these Dr. Markham, as may be supposed, was one, who thus admiringly and prophetically writes, in December 1765:—"I was informed of Ned's cold by a letter from Skynner; I am very glad to hear it is so much better. I should be grieved to hear that he was ill at any time, and particularly at so critical a time as this. I think much will depend on his outset; I wish him to appear at once in some important question. If he has but that confidence in his strength which I have always had, he cannot fail of appearing with lustre. I am very glad to hear from you that he feels his own consequence, as well as the crisis of his situation. He is now on the ground on which I have been so many years wishing to see him. One splendid day will crush the malevolence of enemies, as well as the envy of some who often praise him."

This malevolence had been again excited. For the appoint-

ment had been scarcely gained, when misinformation or malice threatened to fling him back to a private station. Influenced by these statements the Duke of Newcastle, who had accepted the seals, waited upon the Marquis over whom he had some influence, and told him he had unwarily taken into his service a man who was said to entertain dangerous principles, a Papist, and a Jacobite. The allegation was immediately communicated in some alarm to the accused. The latter at once admitted that several of his connections were Roman Catholics, but disclaimed that persuasion for himself and all the members of his family, save his mother and sister. Further, that his education and conduct while at Trinity College, and the tenor of his life after quitting it, were known to several mutual acquaintance who were at hand and might be referred to, to disprove the calumny.

The Marquis saw so much frankness in the explanation, that he readily declared himself satisfied, but not so his independent secretary. He said it was scarcely possible they could unreservedly enter upon confidential communication; for that the impression his Lordship had received would imperceptibly produce reserve and suspicion embarrassing to public business, and so unpleasant to the subject of them, that nothing on earth should induce him to take such a situation.

Struck with this further instance of openness and spirit, the Marquis instantly assured him, that so far from any bad impression remaining on his mind, his manly conduct had obliterated every scruple, and that if for nothing but what had occurred on that occasion, he should ever esteem and place in him the fullest confidence,—a promise which he faithfully performed. "Neither," adds Lord Charlemont, the relator of the anecdote and who personally knew the circumstances, "had he at any time or his friends after his death, the least reason to repent of that confidence; Burke having ever acted towards him with the most inviolable faith and affection, and towards his surviving friends with a constant and disinterested fidelity which was proof against his own indigent circumstances, and the magnificent offers of those in power."

Of this effort to ruin him we have a confidential revelation to Garrick, July, 16, 1765, evidently hinting at Hamilton :—

"You have made me happy by the friendly and obliging satisfaction you are so good to express on this little gleam of prosperity which has at length fallen on my fortune. My situation is, for the present, very agreeable; and I do not at all despair of its becoming, in time, solidly advantageous. So far at least, I thank God! the designs of my enemies, who not long since made a desperate stroke at *my fortune, my liberty, and my reputation* (*all! Hell-kite! all at a swoop*), have failed of their effect; and their implacable and unprovoked malice has been disappointed."

One of his most active friends in this difficulty was Fitzherbert, of whom he thus gratefully writes, and again hints at Hamilton:—

"I should grieve to send our excellent friend, Fitzherbert, to the ape and monkey climes upon any terms. You know and love him; but, I assure you, until we can talk some late matters over, you—even you—can have no adequate idea of the worth of that man. It is no small satisfaction to find that if some men are capable of making the basest return *for affectionate, faithful, and long, long service, and if they endeavour to asperse you whose conscience bears the most faithful witness to your integrity*, yet that there are others who without any previous services whatever, generously, disinterestedly, and nobly forward and aid their friends upon every occasion. When we meet you shall hear more of what you have an heart that can relish."*

To his uncle reference is also made to the attacks upon him when a request was made for the exertion of his interest in a public question:—"I most sincerely pity him, but I believe, when he reflects *how newly, and almost as a stranger I am come among these people, and knows the many industrious endeavours which malice and envy (very unprovoked indeed) have used to ruin me*, he will see that so early a request to suspend the operation of the laws on my bare word, could have no other effect than do me infinite prejudice."

By an arrangement with Lord Verney for which he was, as he said himself, indebted to William Burke, he came in-

* Garrick, writing to Burke in June 1768, has also Hamilton in his eye:—"I dined lately with Lord Halifax; we had great talk about your quondam friend and mine. He knows him to the marrow of him. How will the malignant spirit (I can't read the name you give him in your letter), determine to do with himself at the Northampton election."

mediately into Parliament as Member for Wendover, in Buckinghamshire. It may be remarked, that though the principal appointments under the Ministry and among others that of private secretaries, are mentioned in the Annual Register of the year, his own name seems studiously omitted. William Burke soon afterwards became Under-Secretary of State to General Conway and Member for Bedwin in Wiltshire; sitting for the latter until the general election in 1774; but throwing up his secretaryship in 1767 from the most honourable motives.

Seldom perhaps did a ministry succeed to office under more discouraging circumstances than that under the Marquis of Rockingham. Though of unobjectionable reputation, several of the members were young in office. They were scarcely popular from being supposed to stand in the way of Mr. Pitt. They were not favourites at court on account of holding some principles at variance with those who were, perhaps invidiously called the interior cabinet, or King's friends. Neither were they sufficiently united among themselves by previous concert or personal attachments to calculate upon stability after the death of the Duke of Cumberland, who expired suddenly at a meeting held to arrange some of the business of the session, on the 31st October, 1765.

In America, the discontents were become truly alarming in consequence of the Stamp Act passed by Mr. George Grenville the preceding February, after being opposed by a minority of no more than forty in the House of Commons. Neither debate, division, nor protest took place in the Lords; of so little consequence was the matter deemed.

At home, the manufacturers and merchants were incensed at restrictions which threatened to destroy their trade. The country gentlemen of England however wanted a productive revenue pouring into the English Exchequer, to relieve themselves from the burdens arising from the late war; while the colonies insisted that such revenues they could not and would not afford. One strong and popular party in Parliament declared it treason to the principles of the constitution to tax America without her consent. Another, stronger in numbers and in influence, declared it equally treason to the crown and legislature to surrender the right of taxation; and the latter opinion eventually proved to be the prevailing one in the country.

The best exposition extant perhaps of the state of parties at this period is from the pen of Mr. Burke himself in the *Annual Register* for the year. It is remarkable also, as evincing his moderation as an historian; for though considered in Parliament a strong partizan, yet in writing anonymously he wrote impartially, exhibiting a degree of candour deserving more frequent imitation.

With many irreconcilable interests and opinions to contend, Ministry opened the session for business on the 14th January 1766, when Mr. Burke seized the first opportunity of taking an active part in the discussion concerning America. The details are not otherwise known than by a few notes taken by Lord Charlemont. Mr. Pitt, who professed to have no specific objection to the ministry though he would not give them his confidence, immediately followed Mr. Burke in the debate, and complimented him by observing, "that the young member had proved himself a very able advocate; he had himself intended to enter at length into the details, but he had been anticipated with so much ingenuity and eloquence, that there was little left for him to say; he congratulated him on his success, and his friends on the value of the acquisition they had made." Many acquaintances of the new member were in the gallery purposely to witness this first display of his powers, one of whom was Mr. Murphy; and they all on his quitting the House crowded round him, expressing the greatest pleasure at the result, the praise of Mr. Pitt being of itself in the general opinion, a passport to fame. After this he spoke frequently and at length, and again received some frequent and unusual compliments; the highest estimate being formed of his powers as a speaker.

Richard Burke, now returned from Grenada on leave of absence, writing to Barry the painter, says, 11th of February, a month after the opening of the session, "Your friend (Edmund Burke) has not only spoke, but he has spoke almost every day; as to how I shall leave you to guess, only saying that to a reputation not mean before, he has added more than the most sanguine of his friends could have imagined. He has gained prodigious applause from the public, and compliments of the most flattering kind from particulars; it will add to what I know you already feel on this occasion, to be told that amongst the latter,

was one from Mr. Pitt, who paid it to him in the House in the most obliging manner, and in the strongest terms."

A member of the club* who had treated him rudely on one occasion in consequence of being foiled in a literary discussion, and had found it convenient to absent himself from the coolness thence exhibited towards him by the other members, expressing some surprise at his elevation, Johnson as promptly as prophetically replied, "Sir, there is no wonder at all. We who know Mr. Burke, know that he will be one of the first men in the country." Writing soon afterward, March 9th 1766, to Mr. Langton, Johnson said, "We have the loss of Burke's company since he has been engaged in public business, in which he has gained more reputation than perhaps any man at his first appearance ever gained before. He made two speeches in the House for repealing the Stamp Act, which were publicly commended by Mr. Pitt, and have filled the town with wonder." In another passage he adds the remarkable words, "Burke is a great man by nature, and is expected soon to attain civil greatness."

William Burke, writing in March of the same year thus expresses himself: "You have heard that his (Edmund's) success has exceeded our most sanguine hopes; all at once he has darted into fame; I think he is acknowledged one of the first men in the Commons." Again, "Ned (Edmund) is full of real business, intent upon doing solid good to his country as much as if he was to receive twenty per cent from the commerce of the whole empire which he labours to improve and extend."

Congratulatory letters upon his success poured in from various quarters. Two from Dr. (afterwards Sir James) Marriott and Judge of the High Court of Admiralty, gave him the opinion of one of the Bedford party:—"You are the person the least sensible of all the members of the House of Commons how much glory you acquired last

* Sir John Hawkins, known for his *Life of Johnson* and *History of Music*, but of no genius, and of an irritable and unamiable character. Some idea of his disposition and temper may be formed from the fact, that for his discomfiture on the occasion alluded to, he entertained through life an aversion to Burke, his family, and even to his friends; and occasionally indulged in dark insinuations against them all as men of "desperate fortunes."

Monday night. * * * This testimony comes from a judge of public speaking, the most disinterested and the most capable of judging of it. Dr. Hay (Member for Sandwich) assures me that your speech was far superior to that of every other speaker on the subject of the colonies that night. I could not refrain from acquainting you with an opinion which must so greatly encourage you to proceed; and to place the palm of the orator with those you have already acquired of the writer and philosopher." Again:—"Nothing in the world was more remote from awkwardness or restraint than your manner; that your style, ideas, and expression were particularly your own, natural and unaffected." Sir George (afterwards Lord) Macartney wrote from St. Petersburg, about the same period to William Burke:—"I have no idea of abilities greater or more parliamentary than his" (Edmund's). A memorial from the merchants of Glasgow came opportunely in aid of his views on the American question; followed by a letter of thanks from seventy-seven merchants of Lancaster; and in a few months more the gratifying vote of the freedom of the City of Dublin.

The result of the deliberations of ministry was to repeal the Stamp Act as a matter of expediency, but to pass a declaratory bill asserting the legislative power in all cases, of the mother country. These, if Mr. Burke did not advise he had a considerable share in defending against a strong opposition, which he subsequently characterized "as one of the ablest and not the most scrupulous that ever sat in the House." Neither of the parties however of which it was composed was satisfied, because neither of their principles of coercion or concession were fully recognized.

It may be doubted indeed whether any body of statesmen, acting upon an enlarged system for the general interests of a great country, could prudently have done otherwise than the ministry did. Wisdom is seldom to be found in extremes. They therefore took a middle course between the violence of Mr. Pitt and Mr. Grenville, who it must be confessed gave vent to much matter not very consistent with political discretion; the one about almost perfect freedom to the colonies, the other on the duty of their unlimited submission. The phrase which Burke had applied to the former in his letter to Mr. Flood, of "talking fustian," might now be applied very justly equally to him and to his brother-in-law.

Both laws ultimately passed, though the ministry never recovered the shock they occasioned. Even the members belonging to the King's household voted with Opposition. The merchants however were pleased; the discontents in America sensibly subsided; and might not have been renewed but for what was termed the external taxation plan of Mr. Charles Townshend, unfortunately adopted the succeeding year.

Among other popular measures, a resolution passed the Commons against general warrants. This, and the hope of other favours from his friend the Duke of Grafton now a member of Administration, drew from exile the celebrated Mr. Wilkes. He appeared privately in London early in May 1766, accompanied from Paris by Mr. Lachlan Macleane, an old acquaintance of Burke, and was determined, as he said, either to make his fortune from the fears of the new Government, or to annoy it

The Marquis, however, would not see him. Mr. Burke, accompanied by Mr. Fitzherbert, was sent as his deputy, when after five different interviews, his modest demands to compensate for his sufferings—viz., a free pardon, a sum of money, a pension of £1500 per annum on the Irish establishments, or equivalents—were peremptorily rejected, with a recommendation to leave the country. The negotiation however was conducted with such address and temper by the secretary, that after a douceur of three or four hundred pounds collected from the private purses of ministry had been accepted, this pattern of morality and suffering patriotism retraced his steps to the French capital.

Early in June parliament was prorogued. Towards the end of the month negotiations were on foot for a change of ministry, accelerated by the manœuvres of Lord Chancellor Northington, who to discredit them in every way sent back the commercial treaty with Russia, effected by Sir George Macartney after great difficulty and subsequently admitted to be a very advantageous one, three times for revision on very trifling pretexts. Of this William Burke wrote an account to George; who through this channel and also from his young friend Charles Fox then about to quit Oxford, was much pleased to hear his address and skill in the literary compositions connected with the subject highly eulogized by Edmund Burke.

On the 30th of July the Administration quitted office without pension, sinecure, or reversion to any of its members. His Majesty to the last was extremely complaisant and even kind to their leader. No cause was assigned for this turn out; no political misdeeds attributed to them; excepting a supposition that they had delayed longer than was decorous to make provision for the younger brothers of the king. The Duke of Grafton had relinquished his post in May. He also had no fault to find with his colleagues but that they wanted strength, which he said could only be acquired by a junction with Mr. Pitt. To that popular statesman therefore the details of the new arrangements were committed by an express intimation to that effect from his Majesty, who in a manner surrendered to him at discretion by stating that "he had no terms to propose."

This removal of a body of men of fair talents and obviously good intentions, excited considerable observation in the public mind; for though there was no popular enthusiasm in their favour, there were no murmurs against them. Some considered the Rockinghams hardly treated; a feeling which increased the marked and unvarying unpopularity of their successors. Others fancied they saw a system at work which would permit no ministry to remain long stationary lest it should fix itself too strongly in the hearts of the people. This opinion received some countenance from the pains taken by a minute calculator to turn over the records of office, when it appeared that since Mr. Legge quitted the situation of Chancellor of the Exchequer in May 1761, not less than 530 changes of place in and out, all depending on ministerial influence, had occurred; a circumstance unparalleled in the political history of the country.

The difficulties which occurred in forming the new ministry are sufficiently known to every reader of history. Having disgusted his relative and political associate Lord Temple, the Bedford, the Rockingham, and every other party, Mr. Pitt, now created Earl of Chatham, seemed likely to have the Cabinet nearly to himself. Driven at length to his utmost shifts, by dint of cutting out reversions and pensions (an unfavourable contrast to the system of his predecessors) by harsh dismissals of some from office without known cause, and by as unexpected offers to others who would have nothing to do with him, showing altogether a most perturbed

state of mind, he assembled together a motley group of stragglers, of which seven years afterwards Burke drew the following memorable and scarcely overcharged portrait—

“He put together a piece of joinery so crossly indented and whimsically dovetailed; a cabinet so variously inlaid; such a piece of diversified Mosaic; such a tessellated pavement without cement; here a bit of black stone, and there a bit of white; patriots and courtiers; King’s friends and republicans; Whigs and Tories; treacherous friends and open enemies; that it was indeed a very curious show; but utterly unsafe to touch and unsure to stand on. The colleagues whom he had assorted at the same board stared at each other, and were obliged to ask—Sir, your name? Sir, you have the advantage of me—Mr. Such-a-one—I beg a thousand pardons—I venture to say it did so happen that persons had a single office divided between them who had never spoken to each other in their lives.”

Upon such a slippery pedestal did this eminent man aim to exalt himself to the gaze of the multitude, the chief, almost the only prominent figure in the group. Either dictator, or nothing, had been for some years his motto. Success and popular applause had in some measure spoiled him. He dreamt not of meeting with a superior. He could not brook the idea of having even an equal in office; for he had continually interfered in the details of the official business of others when interference was neither delicate nor required. He had hitherto loftily upheld the supremacy of his own opinions over those of all the rest of the cabinet, none of whom he would condescend to conciliate or persuade, yet loftily expected to govern them all. Though therefore beyond doubt the most popular and successful war minister which Great Britain had ever possessed, his arrogance had repelled and disgusted nearly as many friends as his abilities or eloquence had ever drawn around him.

This disposition unhappily led him to care little for men or measures, except such as came out under his own especial protection. It is difficult for an attentive reader of the history of this period not to believe, that to this overweening confidence in himself and impatience of any thing like equality of talents or power in others, the good of his country was more than once sacrificed. A junction with the Rockingham party while in office would have assured

present harmony with America; and their united good sense, penetration, and the recollection of Sir Robert Walpole's refusal to tax that country, might have eventually warded off that contest for many years, or eventually softened it. The Marquis it seems, made the attempt to win him more than once, but found the truth of Bubb Dodington's assertion that he would be "an impracticable colleague."*

His own scheme of a ministry was utterly hopeless. The former lofty dictator soon submitted to be neglected by the men of his own making. He sunk in a few months to the degree of subaltern in the corps which he had embodied and naturally expected to command; measures being adopted in the cabinet with regard to America (namely, the duties on tea, paper, glass, and painters' colours), in the very teeth of his proclaimed opinions and declarations; exemplifying the truth of another remark of the eloquent advocate of the Rockingham party: "When he had executed his plan, he had not an inch of ground to stand upon. When he had accomplished his scheme of administration, he was no longer minister."

Mr. Burke, desirous to let the public know as much as he knew himself of the cause of the dismissal of his friends, drew up in a few hours an original species of party manifesto, "A short account of a late short Administration." It blamed no person, made no lamentations, used no laboured arguments, drew no direct inferences; but simply stating in as few lines as possible the public measures of the preceding twelve months, left the reader to draw his own conclusions. This of course is, though insinuated rather than expressed, in favour of the party he had espoused; half concealing the character of a dexterous partizan under that of a calm observer.

A sharper skit upon Lord Chatham and his colleagues, in the *Public Advertiser*, followed in a few days in the form of a comment on the preceding, under the signature of

* Horace Walpole, whose politics were of an opposite cast, seems to have had just the same opinion of this popular statesman as a member of Opposition, that Dodington had of him as one of the Ministry—namely, that it was difficult or impossible to act with him. Writing to Lord Hertford, Jan. 22, 1764, he says, in allusion to the state of the Grenville Ministry,—“For Mr. Pitt, you know he never will act like any other man in Opposition, and to that George Grenville trusts: however, here are such materials that if they could once be put in operation for a fortnight together the present Administration would be blown up.”

Whittington, a tallow-chandler in Cateaton Street. It possesses keen irony and humour, was much read and talked of at the time, and has been always attributed to the same pen. These appear in the Annual Register for 1766. Another humorous piece given to him is "Ship News for 1765:" in these the allusions to the chief political characters of the day are happily hit off; and that of Charles Townshend particularly, is in brief, what he afterwards said of him more in detail.

Ten days only elapsed after the retirement of his friends, before he set out for his native country. The motives for this retreat, though "free to choose another connection as any man in the country," do honour to his consistency. "To put himself," as he says, "out of the way of the negotiations which were then carrying on very eagerly and through many channels with the Earl of Chatham, he went to Ireland soon after the change of Ministry, and did not return until the meeting of Parliament. He was at that time free from anything that looked like an engagement. He was further free at the desire of his friends; for the very day of his return, the Marquis of Rockingham wished him to accept an employment under the new system. He believes he might have had such a situation; but again he cheerfully took his fate with the party."

While in Ireland an effort to enlist him into the ranks of ministry was made by the Duke of Grafton to Lord Chatham, then at Bath, in October 1766. The testimony borne to his stability of character even in this early part of his career is worth remembering:—

"If the discontented are not in some measure broke into, I do see a strong phalanx of able personages who will give full employment by the business they will raise up. Among those whom I should wish, and Mr. Conway also wishes, to see to support him, is Mr. Burke, the readiest man upon all points, perhaps, in the whole House. If I mistake not, he was offered the Board of Trade during the last year and declined it, aiming at a higher board, or some equivalent. I cannot help saying that I look upon it that he is a most material man to gain, and one on whom the thoroughest dependence may be given when an obligation is owed."

The reply of the minister two days afterward, while it negatives the proposal, exhibits how far he was behind Burke

in local knowledge of the incapacity of our islands to produce the article (cotton) alluded to, they being then, as now, wholly unfit to supply the demand. "The gentleman your Grace points out as a necessary recruit, I think a man of parts, and an ingenious speaker. As to his notions and maxims of trade, they can never be mine. Nothing can be more unsound and repugnant to every first principle of manufacture or commerce than the rendering so noble a branch as the cottons dependent for the first materials upon the produce of French and Danish islands instead of British. My engagement to Lord Lisburne for the next opening at the Board of Trade is already known to your Grace; nor is it a thing possible to waive for Mr. Burke."*

Another allusion to the extent of his political knowledge occurs about this time in a communication from the well known General Lee, who took part in the American contest, to the Prince Royal of Poland—"An Irishman, Mr. Burke, is sprung up in the House of Commons, who has astonished every body with the power of his eloquence, and his comprehensive knowledge in all our exterior and internal politics and commercial interests. He wants nothing but that sort of dignity annexed to rank and property in England, to make him the most considerable man in the Lower House."

Mrs. Burke, his son, and brother, were with him in the Irish excursion, which continued for three months, visiting Wicklow, Clohir, the little property left by his brother who died in April the preceding year, Cork, Limerick, Galway, and some other places in the southern and western division of that kingdom, not omitting a short visit to Ballitore, the Quaker lady of which he thus pleasantly rallies in a letter from Dublin—"Mrs. Burke gives her love to Mrs. Shackleton; will wear a cap at the time at Ballitore in compliment to her, and it will be as large as she can desire; and yet will leave her something to observe upon too. For next to finery in a lady herself, the criticism of it in another case is the highest satisfaction that can be; and this is one way of indemnifying one's self for the plainness of their habits. So much for you. Mrs. Shackleton, I owe it to you."

A portion of his time was devoted to the antiquities and native language of Ireland. Of the latter he knew a little,

* From Lord Mahon's valuable *History of England*, vol. vi. Appendix.

and about five years afterwards communicated to his old college acquaintance Dr. Leland, who was then writing the History of Ireland, two volumes of old Irish manuscripts, containing several of the ancient written laws of that country in an early idiom of the language which he had accidentally discovered in London, on a bookstall. In allusion to the tongue of his native country, he observed in conversation with Johnson, "The Irish language is not primitive; it is Teutonic; a mixture of the northern tongues; it has much English in it." When the similarity of English and Dutch was mentioned, he added, "I remember having seen a Dutch sonnet in which I found this word, *roesnopies*. Nobody could at first think this was English; but when we inquire, we find *roes*, rose, and *nopie*, nob. So we have the origin of our word *rosebuds*." His acquaintance with the filiation of languages was pronounced by several competent judges to be extensive; a subject which, from his other multifarious occupations might be supposed to have escaped investigation.

Among other places visited during this tour, was the town of Loughrea in the county of Galway, in the neighbourhood of which his sister, Mrs. French, resided. His mother was likewise there, having gone from Dublin to wait a domestic event; and with all the pride of a mother's heart thus describes the visit of her eminent son in a letter to her niece, a Mrs. Henessy.*—

"Loughrea, Oct. 25th, 1766.

"My dear Nelly,—The last post brought me your very agreeable and welcome letter, and I am greatly pleased to hear that you and our friends with you are all well, and am sure it will be very agreeable to you to hear that poor Julia is doing as well as can be expected. * * * It happened on the evening of the day that her brothers and sister set off for Dublin.

"I believe I need not tell you that my pleasure in having them here, where I kept them constantly in view during the period of their stay, was heartily dashed at parting. All the gentlemen and ladies of this town and neighbourhood made a point to visit them, and they had as many invitations to

* From Mr. Haviland Burke; recovered from the repository before mentioned, where with several on mere family affairs they had remained undisturbed more than forty years.

dinner, had they thought fit to accept them all, as would have occupied a great many days. Mr. French of Rasan was (absent) in Cork when they came to this country; but on the morning after his arrival, he, Miss Nagle, Mrs. O'Flaherty, and Miss Driscoll came here, and two days after we were all engaged at Rasan where we dined, and could not well get from thence that night, and it was with much to do that Jane and I could get away.

"Mr. French (of Rasan), Ned and Dick went to look at Galway, and at a great lake which is near to; as soon as they arrived in the town the bells were set ringing in honour of them. On the Monday following, the Corporation met and voted the freedom of the city to Ned, to be sent to him in a silver box. My dear Nelly, I believe you'll think me very vain, but as you are a mother, I hope you will excuse it. I assure you it is not the honours that are done him which make me vain of him, but the goodness of his heart, than which I believe no man living has a better. I am sure there cannot be a better son, nor I think a better daughter-in-law than his wife. I will say nothing of Dick for you would have no longer patience with me. * * *

"This is a very agreeable town to live in, and I believe there is not another in Ireland so small that has in it so many families of fortune as residents. I hope to be in Dublin about the middle of next month, where I shall find a great change from a very good table of two courses, and abroad a coach and six to take the air, to return to a leg of mutton, and otherwise a plain style of living at home and of going abroad. However, I will be as content with the latter as with the former, and will think myself very happy if it pleases God to preserve me the few children I have left alive and well. * * * I have filled my paper, and have only room left to wish you all happiness, and to believe me to be your most affectionate aunt,

"MARY BURKE."

While in Loughrea, an anecdote is recorded, illustrative of his habitual good nature, for the authenticity of which Mrs. B., connected with a gentleman high in office in Dublin, (1826,) and whose relatives then lived on the spot, vouches. Strolling through the town after an early dinner on a fair or market day, desirous of viewing its agricultural produce, his attention was attracted to a group of children, always a

source of interest to him, gazing with intense admiration on the exterior of a kind of puppet-show, or rude theatrical exhibition, to the interior of which there were a variety of invitations for those who had the means to enter. The anxious curiosity, and lamentations of the youthful group of inability to gratify it, induced him to bargain with the proprietor for the admission of the whole, when some of his friends coming up at the moment, insisted upon exercising their privilege as his entertainers in paying the whole of the expense. "No, no," said he, "this pleasure must be all my own; for I shall probably never again have the opportunity of making so many human beings happy at so small a cost." It was another proof of his good sense perhaps as much as of a kind disposition, that he was no croaker against poor human nature, or against the present times, as worse than those which have preceded them. "From the experience which I have had," he remarked, "and I have had a good deal, I have learned to think *better* of mankind."

It appears that jealousy, in the forms of calumny and depreciation, had already begun to assail him, and was rarely intermitted during the remainder of his life. Several attacks had appeared in the London newspapers, to which Shackleton was induced to reply by giving simply a fair statement of his birth and career.

Alluding to this defence, Burke observes to his friend in October 1766:—"Their purpose was, since they were not able to find wherewithal to except to my character for the series of years since I appeared in England, to pursue me into the closest recesses of my life, and to hunt even to my cradle in hope of finding some blot against me. It was on this principle they set on foot this inquiry. I have traced it as far as Mr. Strettell, who refuses to let me know from whom in England he received his commission."

During this visit a lady of rank in Dublin possessed of some literary talents, is said to have drawn his character in the following lines; and it may be observed here that his female acquaintance in both countries seemed to join in the same favourable opinion—

"With judgment witty, eloquent with sense,
Polite with ease, and free without offence."

An anecdote of the same period, illustrative of his jocular spirit was related by the late Mr. Lennan of the Irish bar.

to whose remembrance it was recalled by himself, two or three years before his death, when the memory and peculiarities of several of their old friends were brought under review.

Mr. Ridge, a barrister and intimate friend of Burke, having invited him and Mr. Lennan to dine, urged, as an irresistible inducement, that Foote was to be there, and likewise Mr. Doyle* (a surgeon in Dublin remarkable for wit and humour) between whom he calculated upon a fund of amusement. Mr. Burke however to play a trick upon the English wit, proposed an amendment of the plan; this was to introduce Doyle whom Foote had never seen, in an assumed character, that of a substantial though home-spun Galway farmer, come to town on law business with the host, and who having entered the house at the dinner hour, was obliged in courtesy to be invited to the table; a hint being dropped to the mimic that the opportunity was not to be lost, as he would be a fine subject for his talents to work upon. The scheme took effect. Foote assailed the pretended farmer as the butt of the company, with his whole artillery of broad-faced mirth, ridicule, mimicry and banter—chuckling with evident satisfaction at his own apparent superiority, and the laughter created against “Squire Ploughshare.” The latter acting his part, and submitting with good humour in order to see the full power of his adversary, at length seemed to pluck up spirit to retort, and pretending gradually to assume confidence, poured out so much wit and humour on the head of the actor, that the latter could not conceal his surprise, and almost confessed himself matched; exclaiming every now and then to his host, “Where did you pick up this barn-door genius?” “Bitter dog!” “Sharp as one of his own sickles!” “Well said for a bumpkin!” and others to the same effect; nor was he informed who his opponent really was until the moment of separation.

The session commencing October 1766, saw the Rockingham connection nearly quiescent. The fame of its ablest member however as far as he thought fit to exert himself, continued to rise. William Burke, writing about this time, says, “Our friend E. B. has acted all along with so unwearied a worthiness, that the world does him the justice to believe that in his public conduct he has no one view but the public

* Author of a piece well-known in Ireland “Daniel O'Rourke's Dream.”

good." Lord Charlemont shortly afterward thus wrote to Mr. Flood:—"I some time ago sent to Leland an account of our friend Burke's unparalleled success, which I suppose he communicated to you. His character daily rises, and Barré is totally eclipsed by him; his praise is universal and even the Opposition who own his superior talents, can find nothing to say against him but that he is an impudent fellow. Yesterday a bill was brought into the Commons to exclude the importation of Irish wool from certain ports in England, when Burke supported the cause of Ireland in a most masterly manner, and the bill was rejected."

The phrase "impudent fellow," was not wholly jocular, but in fact grounded on a jealousy very general then in the House of Commons and which operated against him for many years, of deeming it a species of presumption in men without private weight to assume a parliamentary lead. In that assembly it appears this spirit displayed itself sometimes. Without, it burst forth continually in virulent abuse, chiefly in allusion to his being an Irishman—his Jesuitical education, as they would have it, at St. Omer—and his *assurance* in attempting to controvert the political principles, or to seize the lead from men so much his superiors in station.

Such a feeling which would not now be tolerated for a moment, was then perhaps considering the aristocratic structure of even the popular branch of the legislature, scarcely strange. He was not merely new to the House, but in a certain degree new to the country. He was without the essential adjuncts of commanding wealth or high connections; and thence was regarded in the light of one who usurps a station to which he has no proper claim. For it is another of his characteristics in an eventful career, to have been the *first* who attained under so many disadvantages, to consequence in Parliament and in the country, simply by unaided talents; and thus to have smoothed the road in the House of Commons for those who have been, and others who may be again, similarly situated.

It was a source of no ordinary wonder to all, to see **such a man** not generally familiar to the political world and **without** known practice in public business, start at once to the highest eminence in that arduous pursuit. It was annoying to many to see their consequence overshadowed, their abilities by the force of contrast tacitly lessened, and an utter

stranger bound at once over their heads from the retirement of private life to the imposing station of a first rate orator and an accomplished statesman.

This success, on considering his extraordinary capacity and acquirements, is not to us so inexplicable as it then seemed to casual observers. Scarcely any one perhaps who ever entered the House of Commons, had laboured so diligently to qualify himself for the duties of the office he was to fulfil, or united with diligence so much genius and power to profit by his labours. He possessed nothing else to sustain him. His general knowledge was various, and of such ready application, that in argument, or in illustration, his resources appeared boundless. He had carefully studied the ancients, and stored up what they knew. From the moderns he had drawn improved principles of law, morals, politics, and science. To these he could add, when he thought proper, the logic and metaphysics of the schools, with the more popular acquirements of poetry, history, criticism, and the fine arts. In powers of imagination no orator of any age has approached him; in prompt command of words, and in vigour of language, very few; in felicity, and when he pleased, elegance of diction when he seized the pen, no writer of modern times. He had, in fact, enriched a soil naturally good by such assiduous culture, that it often threatened, and sometimes did bring forth weeds along with the choicest products. All this was accomplished, not in the quiet of affluence, but in the bustle of struggling for an adequate provision in life. "I was not," said he, in his forcible manner, "swaddled, rocked, and dandled into a legislator. *Nitor in adversum* is the motto for a man like me."

He was arrived too at the age of thirty-six—a time when this multifarious knowledge was digested and methodized—when the useful had been winnowed from the chaff; when the mind of a man if ever worth any thing is capable of the most vigorous exertion. It was an age, however, at which as experience has proved, few men—we have not perhaps another instance—who enter Parliament for the first time, are destined to attain the very highest degree of eminence either as orators or men of business. This of itself would distinguish him as an uncommon man. If he ever entertained any doubt on this point himself, it was no sooner thought of than conquered by an application that

knew no intermission, and a zeal that no obstacle could subdue.

Respectable mediocrity as a speaker was as much perhaps as many however high their previous opinion might be could reasonably anticipate for him. To be distinguished in the Senate, the great arena of national talent, is the lot of few. To become great is one of those chances of life confined to genius of a high order. Neither is it likely that he knew the extent of his own energies on first gaining admission there, for it is occasion alone that elicits them from most men; and those occasions were always at hand in the numerous and extraordinary occurrences of the late reign.

His rhetorical efforts were aided in an eminent degree by a tenacious memory, which made almost every thing once embraced by it a permanent acquisition. This perhaps is one of the most valuable gifts of nature to an orator. It will always supply him with matter, with words, and not unfrequently with wisdom. Men vary in this respect very much. It is the delight of many to read much and to read attentively; but it is in the power of very few to retain what they have learnt with accuracy, or to draw it out in a popular manner, or on popular topics, so as to enliven or illustrate their discourse. No man possessed this faculty in a more eminent degree than him of whom we speak, and of the strength of his recollection on more recondite subjects, the following from high authority is a striking instance.

A relative* of Burke having called many years ago upon the late Chief Baron Richards when at the bar to consult him, the attention of the latter became diverted by the name to the memory and to the praises of the orator; and as soon as he understood the relationship existing between him and his client, after a warm eulogy on his powers, mentioned the following anecdote as having come within his own knowledge.

Having dined at a party where among others were the Irish orator and an Archdeacon of Brecon whose name is not remembered, the latter who was a man of considerable learning and antiquarian research, started several subjects of conversation so unusual, that few of his hearers felt

* Mr. Haviland Burke.

inclined or qualified to accompany him. Mr. Burke remained silent for some time, until in the midst of a fluent detail of some of the operations of Cæsar in Britain, he stopped the relater short by pointing out a material error as to facts, which changed the whole complexion of the story. The clergyman bowed, without making any reply. One of the more obscure Latin authors formed the next topic of discussion, in a quotation from whom the same critic again corrected him as to two or three words, which was received with the same silent acquiescence. A third subject of debate was an old and very scarce volume containing some curious geographical details, with which also he very successfully displayed his acquaintance to the surprise of the company. At the conclusion of the evening, Mr. Richards and the Archdeacon walked home together. "Sir," observed the former, "I admired your patience when so repeatedly, and I dare say unnecessarily, interrupted by our eminent fellow guest; for from the nature of your studies you must be a more competent judge of such matters than the bustle of politics can permit him to be." "Mr. Burke was nevertheless right, and I was wrong," replied the Archdeacon: "nay more; I confess I went previously prepared to speak on those subjects, for knowing that I was to meet him and hearing that he was acquainted with almost every thing, I had determined to put his knowledge to the test, and for this purpose had spent much of the morning in my study. My memory however proved more treacherous than I had imagined."

Before the prorogation in July, an offer is said to have been made him by the Duke of Grafton, now rendered by circumstances more independent of Lord Chatham, of a seat at the Treasury; but clogged with stipulations to which he refused to accede. A hint of this seems to be dropped by himself in a letter to Barry. "The measures since pursued, both with regard to men and things have been so additionally disagreeable, that I did not think myself free to accept any thing under this Administration." A negotiation for the main body of the Rockingham party to join the ministry soon followed, but came to nothing, "because," says he in another letter, "it was not found practicable with honour to undertake a task

like that until people understood one another a little better, and can be got to a little cooler temper, and a little more fair dealing."

In February 1767, Richard Burke, who seemed to linger as much as possible at home rather than fill the Grenada appointment, wrote thus affectionately of his brother. "Now, my dear friend, you expect some account of Ned. In one word then (I shall use twenty) he is as well in health as you would wish; a little more jovial than you would approve; and not quite as rich as you would desire or perhaps expect. What he has is his own; he owes the public nothing, whatever the public may owe him. Indeed the public is just to him in one thing, let the rest come when it will. * * * It is just to his character. For honour, for integrity, and for ability, no man ever stood higher in public estimation in this kingdom, and I will say—but it is to you that I am speaking—no man ever better deserved it."

During the summer he had a visit from the Nagles and other Irish relatives. To these he was enabled to shew some farming improvements through his friends, and afterwards rallied them pleasantly upon some ill success in Irish schemes as promising to be like the ingenious farmers in Gulliver—with a great deal of knowledge of agriculture, but no crops.—He paid a visit himself of some length to Lord Rockingham in Yorkshire, with whom a constant confidential correspondence was kept up on public affairs until the death of that nobleman. A visit was likewise paid by him, along with Admiral Keppel, to the Duke of Richmond at Goodwood; and another to the Duke of Newcastle at Claremont, who had now learned to display great respect for his conduct and talents.

On the opening of the session November 1767, he broke ground against the ministry in an impressive speech, condemning their general conduct and happily ridiculing General Conway's lamentations for the recent death of Charles Townshend and the loss of his projected plans for the public good; which were rather absurdly stated as likely to remove the difficulties of the country, though none of his colleagues knew what they were.

This step indicated irreconcilable differences of opinion, and in fact some resentment between the Ministry and the Rockingham party. Three meetings to effect a junction between them had taken place in vain. Lord Chatham is

said to have resorted to what was considered unfair means while others attribute these means to the Duke of Grafton, to separate the friends of the Marquis from those of the Duke of Newcastle, though unsuccessfully, and to which he alluded when he said the motto of ministry was *Divide et Impera*. The Bedford party, however, proved more compliant to the wishes of his Lordship and his Grace than the Rockinghams; and in a fortnight afterwards they coalesced, forming what was called the Grafton Administration. The Nullum Tempus Bill; the distresses produced by the high price of provisions; the restraining act relative to the India Company; and a few other minor topics, occupied Mr. Burke the first part of the session.

In March 1768, Parliament was dissolved, the new one meeting in May, when he was again returned for Wendover. About the same time he purchased, for above £20,000, a small estate and agreeable residence since burnt down, named Gregories, near Beaconsfield in Buckinghamshire; the expense being increased by being obliged against his inclination to take the seller's collection of pictures and marbles, as appears by a letter written in July to Barry the painter. Of this purchase he writes soon afterwards to Shackleton—"I have made a push with all I could collect of my own and the aid of my friends to cast a little root into this country. I have purchased a house with six hundred acres of land in Buckinghamshire, twenty-four miles from London, where I now am (May 1st.) It is a place exceedingly pleasant; and I propose, God willing, to become a farmer in good earnest."

How the money was procured to effect the purchase mentioned in this letter, has given rise to many surmises and reports. A part undoubtedly was his own, the bequest of his elder brother, and some portion is believed came from William Burke. The remainder was to have been raised upon mortgage, when the Marquis of Rockingham hearing of his intention, voluntarily offered the loan of the amount required to complete the purchase. It has been said that he even tendered a larger sum, which the delicacy of his friend declined to receive, accepting only what was absolutely necessary; and this upon condition of being repaid the first opportunity.

That moment never arrived. While the waverer or changeling, the coy Whig or doubtful Tory, seized upon such op-

portunities as offered for advancing their personal interests, Burke remained stable in his opinions and therefore unprosperous. By consistency he closed the door of office against himself, and thus repaid in principle to his patron what he was indebted in money. The termination of the affair is told by a delicate hint from the noble successor of the Marquis, written amidst a burst of grief immediately after his death, July 3, 1782:—"I must recollect myself. It was my duty to have informed you that certain bonds are cancelled by a codicil of his will. He felt merit as he ought to have done, and he never did an action in his life more acceptable to your sincere friend,

"FITZWILLIAM."

Honourable as the transaction was to the friendship and delicacy of both, the ingenuity of party abuse has converted it into an attack upon the integrity of the person most obliged. Yet the Marquis was undoubtedly under obligations to him, both publicly as exponent of his policy, and for some attention paid to the business of his large estates in Ireland when in that country two years before. Less disinterested men indeed would have settled the matter otherwise—the one by quartering his friend, the other by being quartered, on the public purse. To the honour of both a different course was pursued; and admitting that the money was never reclaimed, it did not produce a third part of the annual income which the Whig party with great consideration and liberality presented to Mr. Fox before quitting him in 1794.

The aspect of affairs on the opening of the session of 1768 seemed not a little threatening. Remonstrances, petitions, and non-importation agreements, seconded by strong private representations to men of influence here, daily arrived from America. These, on the motion for the address, brought out some severe comments from Mr. Burke, on the conduct of Ministers to that country; their passiveness on the invasion of Corsica; and on some other popular topics of the time. Another conspicuous and constitutional effort was on the injustice sanctioned by a new bill, of bringing Americans guilty of treason in their own country to England for trial.

Lord Chatham at length resigned. With difficulties thickening round the Ministry, an old and troublesome political performer, scarcely less a source of alarm to his friends than

to his enemies, appeared upon the scene. This was Mr. Wilkes, again reduced to his last shilling, who, thriving by no other trade but patriotism, found it necessary to invite persecution in order to extract money; and suddenly appearing from Italy as candidate for London, and then for Middlesex though with an outlawry hanging over his head, unexpectedly gained the election.

The vacillation of Government, the legal proceedings, riots, and general ferment which ensued, require no other notice here than for the employment they gave Mr. Burke and Mr. Grenville, the leaders of the two divisions of Opposition, who agreeing in this, had few other points of union. The question of the patriot's expulsion, so memorable in the history of the country, was carried against the strenuous exertions of both, 3rd of February 1769. A motion for an inquiry into the riot in St. George's fields, by the former, was negatived by a great majority. Wilkes's affairs, America, seditious libel, the civil list, East India affairs, and others, afforded him fruitful themes for every week of the session; and, along with several other gentlemen of Buckinghamshire, he presented a petition to the King at the levee, against the decision of the House of Commons. Toward the close of it, an argument on the taxation of the colonies occurred between him and Mr. Grenville, which evinced that the latter, with four years' experience, had gained no increase of wisdom on the imprudence and impracticability of that measure. "He behaves," says Dr. Franklin writing of that gentleman shortly before, "as if a little out of his head on the article of America, which he brings into every debate without rhyme or reason; tiring every body, even his own friends, with harangues about and against America."

An appeal likewise by Mr. Grenville from the majority in Parliament to the country generally through the medium of the press which shortly followed brought the rival leaders more immediately before the public. It was in a pamphlet entitled, "The Present State of the Nation," written either by himself or by Mr. Knox, a former secretary of his, under his eye; and which, without formally mentioning names, was designed to praise his own and Lord Bute's measures, and censure those of Lord Rockingham.

The reply of Burke, in "Observations" on this pro-

duction, his first avowed political pamphlet and little inferior to any that followed it, displayed the danger of attacking one who was so thoroughly master of his subject and his weapons. In this piece he convicts his opponent of inconclusive reasoning, of inaccuracy in many of his statements, and of ignorance as to facts and details on the great principles of commerce and revenue on which Mr. Grenville particularly plumed himself. Altogether the exposure here made, gives us a strong impression what a poor figure an active minister and debater in the House of Commons may make with his pen. A remarkable passage in this pamphlet on the then financial condition of France of which Mr. Grenville seemed to know little, illustrates what took place twenty years afterwards, and exhibits the length of view which his more gifted adversary applied to this as to most other subjects.*

About this time Junius broke forth upon the English world with a vigour and rancour never surpassed, and from under a mask which has never been penetrated. From the first, he seems to have excited no less wonder in political than admiration in many literary circles. Audacious beyond all precedent; unscrupulous yet with an air of fairness; a lofty tone; keen discernment; familiar seemingly with public men and affairs; well informed upon private matters which were chiefly known in the higher spheres of life; argumentative when he thought proper; and with powers of invective wholly unrestrained, his successive publications were looked to with unusual interest as having something to reveal, or some public delinquent to denounce. To many literary men he appeared a master in his art. Elegant, or aiming at elegance in style; powerful in language; concise, terse, bitter or sarcastic as occasion required; no words thrown away and few superfluous ones introduced; similes of some novelty and figures of more or less force; he placed the powers of our language in a new and forcible light. He wrote fearlessly because he wrote anonymously. Like a meteor he gleamed in the political horizon; and like other

* "Under such extreme straitness and distraction, labours the whole body of their finances, so far does their charge outrun their supply in every particular, that no man, I believe, who has considered their affairs with any degree of attention or information, but must hourly look for some extraordinary convulsion in that whole system; *the effects of which on France, and even on all Europe, it is difficult to conjecture.*"

meteors, having excited the gaze of wondering spectators for a season, disappeared in illimitable space. None knew, or has accurately ascertained, whence he came or whither he went.

Universal opinion fixed at once upon Burke as the author. Conversations, pamphlets, letters, paragraphs, and occasional caricatures arrived simultaneously at that decision. All his enemies—and the accusation alone made many—Lord Mansfield among others—told him so. All his friends, if they did not hint their opinion, fully believed it; and among these Dr. Johnson, until a spontaneous disavowal undeceived him. None else was supposed capable of wielding a pen of so much ability, or of exhibiting such perfect knowledge of the men and measures of the time. The extent of abuse poured upon him in consequence, will surprise any reader who may have the courage—as it has been my duty—to wade through the newspapers of the day—and however suspicion wavered for a time over other claimants, it returned again and again to him, until the announcement of the evidence touching Sir Philip Francis.

In the first edition of this work however I thought it necessary to state the circumstances supposed to implicate Mr. Burke. I was quite aware of his own constant denials. I knew that he had done so to all his friends; spontaneously to many. I was informed that he had repeatedly done the same in letters to various persons who had deemed themselves authorised to put the question, and among others, in 1771, “on his word and honour” to Mr. Charles Townshend,* and Dr. Markham, then Bishop of Chester. I was quite sure that the Marquis of Rockingham with whom he was so intimately linked, never would have permitted such things to appear; and without his privity it was equally certain that from real respect for him, as well as from kindlier feelings and prudential motives, he would never have entered upon a course of such envenomed hostility. I knew that he had attributed the success of Junius to what he called “the instrumental part of writing,” that is style—in fact that manner, not matter, had made him what he was. In the second edition I became still more satisfied that there was no solid foundation for the charge. Others, his

* Son of Mr. Thomas Townshend, afterwards Lord Sydney, whom Goldsmith has commemorated.

relatives, thought differently, and believed they could add many details to the circumstances of suspicion. To these I thought it fair on a disputed point to give place, though with an intimation as to my own opinion.*

But the publication of the Grenville papers has set the question at rest for ever as regards him. The anonymous hero, in his private letters to Mr. George Grenville, fairly offers himself to him as a thorough partizan. He is, he says, attached to him and to him alone; esteems his spirit and understanding; is devoted to his views as far as he can ascertain what these views and opinions are; he has been writing for two years past or more, a multitude of papers in addition to those of Lucius, Atticus and others in support of his character and measures; he owns to being unknown and unconnected; at a proper time he will disclose himself; has a great desire to be honoured with his notice, but must wait till he is Minister; he will not be a troublesome dependant; and again disclaims connection with any party.

Not a point here applies to the subject of this memoir. Familiarly known to George Grenville; opposed to him continually in the House of Commons; dissenting from nearly all his views; exposing his errors in the pamphlet just mentioned (1769); the leading organ of the Rockingham, and therefore closely connected with party; and who in the "multitude of papers" alluded to, was himself frequently the subject of censure and depreciation; who possessed too high a spirit to solicit to become the dependant of any one; whose own position in public opinion was at least equal to that of the gentleman addressed—added to the manner in which he speaks of him in confidential letters to Lord Rockingham—all these render it utterly impossible ever again to connect his name seriously with that of Junius.

Mr. Burke spent the recess at Gregories in superintending the repairs and alterations of his house; and in attention to rural business proved as active a farmer as any in the country, being often in the fields in a morning as soon as his labourers. This he described as luxury after the noise, heat, and drudgery of the House of Commons. In town he

* "If circumstantial evidence have material weight in any instance, it is difficult to believe, from the details some time ago published, that Sir Philip Francis was not the man."

usually had a temporary residence during the sitting of parliament, sometimes in the Broad Sanctuary, Fludyer Street, Charles Street, Duke Street, 37, Gerrard Street, and some others. He had intended, he told Shackleton, a journey to Italy at this period, but found too many occupations at home.

Amid many other engagements, added to the labours of politics, a more humble friend was not forgotten. His protection of Barry has been already noticed. The moment his own means became extended by being connected with Administration, he recommended him, seconded by the advice of Reynolds, to go to Italy for improvement, and with William Burke, offered to the best of their power to maintain him while there till he had copied or studied the great masters. The painter set out in October 1765, and remained abroad above five years. During the whole of this time he earned nothing for himself, and received no supplies from any other quarter than his two generous friends, who fulfilled their promises amid serious difficulties and claims of their own, in which William in one of his letters was obliged to confess, that "cash was not so plentiful as he could wish." A fact of this kind, so rarely imitated by rank or wealth, speaks more for the heart than any formal panegyric, though it is only one instance among many of the benevolence of the subject of this work.

Barry felt the weight of his obligations. Of Dr. Sleigh, he said, "He first put me upon Mr. Burke, who has been, under God, all in all to me." Writing to the Doctor himself, he says, "To your goodness I owe Mr. Burke and his family, which, in one word, is owing you all that is essential to me." To Mr. Burke he writes, "I am your property." And again, "You ought surely to be free with a man of your own making, who has found in you father, brother, friend, every thing."*

* This artist was not the only instance of his benevolence and friendship whenever circumstances placed it in his power to be of service. Barrett, also an Irishman, had fallen into difficulties by the improvidence too frequently attendant on genius, and the fact coming to the ears of Mr. Burke in 1782, during his short tenure of power, he bestowed upon him a place in Chelsea Hospital, which was enjoyed for the remainder of his life. Mr. Young gives the following account of this artist, appended to a landscape of his in Sir John F. Leicester's gallery:—"The first notice of the pictures of this artist that appears on record is his obtaining from the Society of Arts a premium of 50 guineas. He was considered the best landscape painter of the time he lived in; and although the patrons of art

Frequent correspondence with their protégé was maintained by the family, chiefly however through the medium of William, as being less occupied in business; but occasionally with Edmund, who addresses him with the affection of a brother, and whose remarks and admonitions are so fine in themselves, and display such an intimate acquaintance with the arts and with the world, couched in an eloquent style, that it would be a crime equally against his reputation, and the enjoyment of the reader, not to give a few of the principal letters from him which will be found in another place.

A close intimacy had existed for some years with Garrick, to whom as we have seen, confidential communications were made; and he and his wife invited to frequent visits in the country.—“You first,” Burke writes, “sate yourself with wit, jollity, and luxury, and afterwards retire hitlier to repose your person and understanding on early hours, boiled mutton, drowsy conversation, and a little clabber milk.” In June of this year, some pressing necessity compelled him to solicit a loan from his friend.—“My dear Garrick,—I make no apology for asking a favour from you, because you need make none in refusing it. I wish then that you would let me have a thousand pounds upon my bond until this time twelvemonth. I shall at that time, possibly before, be able to discharge it, and will not fail to do so. I am with great truth and affection, dear Garrick, most sincerely yours, EDM. BURKE.”

Whether the money was lent does not appear. The actor's usual address in reply was “*Carissimo mio Edmundo.*” Burke had been obliged to refuse a public request of his shortly before, from its being against the wishes of his constituents. But soon afterwards sent him the following pleasant and well expressed note, now in my possession, as a tacit apology for the refusal.—

“(August, 1769.)

“Dear Garrick,—I send you a *Rosa sera*, a late turtle—an entertainment at least as good for the palate as the other

cannot be accused of not duly appreciating his merits, yet after a long and successful career almost without a rival, partly from a liberality of disposition, and an indulgence in expensive habits, he was not enriched by his professional labours.

“His merits were recognized by the Royal Academy, of which he was elected a member; and during the latter part of his life he enjoyed an appointment in Chelsea Hospital, given to him by his friend and patron, Edmund Burke.

CHAPTER V.

Mr. Burke and Sir William Bagott—Mr. Fox—Pamphlet on the Discontents—Parliamentary Business—Visit to France—Character of the House of Commons—Mr. Burke's argument against taxing Irish Absentees—Letter to General Lee—Speech of the 19th of April, 1774—Goldsmith—Ill-humour of Barry—Johnson and Burke—Election for Bristol.

THE address, in reply to the speech from the throne, the City remonstrance to the King, the condition of Ireland, the affairs of Mr. Wilkes, the state of Boston and the King's troops, and the discontents which generally prevailed, brought Mr. Burke forward almost daily in the session commencing 9th January, 1770, although few details are preserved. His more distinguished exertions were on the 24th January, for a redress of grievances previous to granting a supply: on the 15th March, regarding the famous address, remonstrance, and petition of the City of London to the King, which he discussed with moderation and temper, aiming to apologize for the warmth of the popular feeling: on the 28th March, in favour of the bounty on the exportation of corn: on the 30th March, in support of Mr. Grenville's bill for regulating the trials of controverted elections, when he was represented by the writers of the time as having on those occasions spoken "inimitably well."

On the 8th May, he moved eight resolutions, supported by Mr. G. Grenville, relating to the disorders in North America, which were meant to censure the plan, or rather as he said the unhappy want of plan of Ministers, in conducting the affairs of that country; and introduced by a speech occupying two hours in delivery, reported by contemporary opinion, to be "full of sound argument, and infinite wit and raillery." In fact, all his exertions were characterized as being of this description, though from the hostility of the House at that time to the publication of their debates, the particulars like those of other speeches are not given, or given so meagrely as to afford little idea of what they were in delivery.

A tolerable criterion of the powers of a speaker in the House at that period, was the degree of abuse cast upon him by anonymous writers of the opposite party; and of this

ungracious species of reputation to which allusion has been already made, he had no ordinary share. The prejudice which it occasionally created against him, even among persons who ought to have known better, may be judged of from the following circumstance:—

In the debate on the third reading of Mr. Grenville's bill for regulating controverted elections, which Lord North, Mr. Fox and the Ministry opposed, Sir William Bagott, who usually voted with the latter, said he must on that measure, side with Opposition; not from the slightest partiality to that body, for its whole system in his opinion, went to wound the constitution through the sides of the Ministry. He concluded by insinuating something about the body with which he was chiefly connected (the country gentlemen) being the only one of real importance or consideration in that House, and to whom the first and chief attention should be paid.

Mr. Burke, as the mouth-piece of the party, was not likely to let such declarations escape without notice. He entered on a vigorous defence of his friends; drew a fine distinction between faction, and the opposition of party founded on principle. He proceeded to show that Parliament was not meant to be a representation of the landed property only as the preceding speaker seemed to believe, but of the commercial interest in an equal or still greater degree, as appeared from the establishment of boroughs—essential parts of that representation, in times earlier than any annals or history could trace; that there never was any parliament from which gentlemen of the long robe were excluded, except that one, infamous to a proverb, in the appellation which it acquired of *parliamentum indoctum*. He went on to compare the benefit derived to society from the unactuated load of landed abilities, which descended from generation to generation, to that derived from the acquirements, improvements, and activity of mental superiority; and showed that either alone might be pernicious, yet that both were of real benefit wherever and whenever they mixed, but always more so when acting in aid of each other.

The pleasantry with which this topic was handled, as well perhaps as the general tone of the argument, irritated Sir William to a violent degree, insomuch that he went down to the House two days after and gave loose to a most un-

measured invective against what he termed his "traducer," designating him indirectly a "black Jesuit," "a pupil of St. Omer's," fit to be "secretary to an inquisition for burning heretics." Mr. Burke, who on these occasions preserved great equanimity of temper, smiled frequently during this tirade; and on its conclusion, assailed him again with a torrent of ridicule, which it is said the baronet never forgave.

On another occasion, a considerable time after this, Sir William preserved more temper, and came off with better success. Mr. Burke having spoken at considerable length, made a long pause, a thing rather unusual with him, which induced the baronet, who rose to follow him in the debate, to think he had ended.—"Sir, I have not yet concluded," said Mr. Burke.—"I beg pardon," replied Sir William with good humour, "but the honourable member can make allowance for the mistakes of a country gentleman;" adding with great happiness, a quotation to the effect that being no more than a rustic, he conceived the stream of eloquence had ceased, but though it seemed wholly inexhaustible, it might probably prove tiresome.—It frequently happened, however, that the baronet came under the sarcastic lash of his more ready and dexterous opponent.

Sir William Bagott indeed was not the only one who thought that the importance and wisdom of a senator ought to depend on the amount of the stake he possesses in the land. Lord Crewe told Mr. Haviland Burke a pleasant story of a very opulent Liverpool trader, who having invested a large sum in the purchase of estates, expressed the height of his ambition to be to have a park as large as that of the Duke of Bedford. Calling upon his lordship one day, at a time when from some matter of political interest Mr. Burke's name was on every tongue, and in every newspaper, he exclaimed in a broad, vulgar, self-sufficient manner—"And after all, who is this Mr. Burke, my Lord, that they make such a fuss about? Why, he's nobody.—*He has not got our number of acres, my Lord.*"

The unmeasured abuse cast upon him, induced Shackleton, then in London, to draw up a fair sketch of his character for the public, which was printed in April in the London Evening Post. This gave him great offence. He wrote a most angry letter, stating that his table and bed, hitherto sacred, had been for the first time wantonly forced before the public; his life or conduct required no defence; he was accus-

tomed to libels daily and twice a day; and it was great imprudence or worse in others to notice such things, as he never descended to do so himself. A deprecatory letter followed from his well-intentioned but unlucky friend. In May he rejoined by an apology for the hastiness of temper shewn in his last letter; the offence was forgiven and forgotten; adding that he is "liable to spurts of passion; sometimes quick to offend, but ready to atone."*

A circumstance, which subsequent events made of interest, took place in the debate on the address this session when Mr. Charles Fox, in almost his first parliamentary essay, attempting to answer the objections of the Rockingham party had some of his arguments successfully turned into ridicule by its leader. No offence was taken by the young orator. He had been taught some time before by the literary society at his father's table, to think highly of the talents of Mr. Burke. He had known him personally since 1766, at the age of seventeen or as Burke once said fourteen; and they had been intimate for about two years; and in 1769 he paid a visit to Gregories. Further acquaintance insured to the latter that admiration from his younger friend, which all who knew him intimately involuntarily felt. From an admirer of Burke, Mr. Fox became his disciple; from his disciple his coadjutor; from his coadjutor an amicable rival for fame; until at length, by the occurrence of extraordinary and unlooked-for events, they terminated as they began, in being opponents.

Of this celebrated man it is unnecessary to speak at length, and perhaps difficult to draw a very faithful character without giving offence to devoted friends, or gratifying the spleen of political adversaries. Of powers the most commanding, and parliamentary talents very extraordinary, he did not often exemplify, either in public or private life, the possession of that sound prudence and practical wisdom which insure public confidence. Something of this was owing to natural disposition; something perhaps to parental indulgence, which left him in the most critical period of life wholly uncontrolled. His mind, manly even in youth, seemed to have reached maturity at a bound. Between the boy and the statesman there was scarcely an interval. But there accom-

* It is remarkable that Shackleton makes the mistake in this paper, of calling Mrs. Burke a Roman Catholic. This was wholly as already stated incorrect; he merely inferred it from the faith of her father.

panied this early precocity an utter disregard of self-discipline and control, verging to absolute tyranny of the passions over the judgment. The very excess of dissipated habits, his neglect of the observances of common life, his indifference to private character which even in his most popular days made him an object of distrust to the reflecting part of the nation, all indicated an ill-regulated mind. It is said as an additional proof of it, that he neglected too commonly the performance of religious duties. If so, who but must sincerely regret so great a misfortune? If such be the inevitable result of early debauchery upon the character, it is, indeed, a heavy sentence upon frail humanity.

Yet his virtues were of the first cast. He was affectionate, mild, generous, friendly, and sincere; thus obscuring his errors so effectually that scarcely one of his friends could see them, or for a moment admit the uncharitable interpretation often put upon them by the world. Few men in public life, except perhaps the Irish orator, have had more political enemies though in private perhaps not one. We might be displeased with the politician, but it was scarcely possible to hate the man. There was a good-natured, almost culpable, facility about his character when popularity was in question, which he often avowed he loved dearly, that frequently brought him into the society, and sometimes under the influence, of persons not only of inferior talents, but of questionable principles and views. Without any community of ill-feeling with these, or with the enemies of our constitution and government, it must be confessed that he occasionally gave such persons his countenance so as to alarm the more cautious, the more circumspect, or more timid part of the public. This was one of his many sacrifices to vulgar applause; made at a time when it became necessary to strengthen his few remaining adherents by allies of every description. The same facility made him, in the opinion of many, a dupe to the plausibility of Buonaparte, in 1802 and 1806, and at the former period, caused him to admit to his table in France a convicted Irish traitor, fresh from carrying arms against his country.

The extraordinary powers which he possessed were chiefly from nature, and in debate he often seemed to depend upon them alone, without consulting the surer guide of experience. He possessed as may be supposed, infinitely more of ingenuitv

than of knowledge; more of immediate and spontaneous thought than of the fruits of patient research; more of decision than of reflection. He was more acute than discriminating; on most public matters self-willed through life; obstinately attached to his own opinions, and undervaluing though not offensively, those of the rest of mankind. He was heard to say in the earlier part of his career that "he had never wished to do anything which he did not do," and that "he considered advice an insult to his understanding."

In conversation he was backward and sluggish, seldom rising above mediocrity; in epistolary communication, commonplace; in historical writing, slow and laborious, neither profound nor original. In debate alone he often rose above all competition, especially in bursts of indescribable power; but as an orator taken in the higher and more extended sense of the word, whose outpourings are worthy to live in the page of history and in the admiration of posterity, he was on all great occasions much excelled by Burke. He had no command over the passions or imaginations of his hearers, and without this power an orator never can be at the head of his art. The bent of his mind in politics was to great things rather than to the more common; to what was imposing and theoretically perfect, rather than to what was useful and applicable. He caught eagerly at the bold and the splendid; at daring novelties and plausible generalities without sufficiently considering, or caring for, the difficulties opposed to their being carried into effect. No one knew men better in every-day life; but he did not so well know *man*, when placed in uncommon and untried situations.

A remarkable distinction between him and Burke was, that the latter, though educated like a philosopher and often teaching with the wisdom of one, rejected all theory opposed to experience in treating of the practical business of the state. While Fox, brought up as a man of the world and always declaiming as such, appeared in practice often inclined to play the mere philosopher. Though equally grand in his views, he had not the same knowledge, the same caution, the same penetration as Burke, to foresee their results. What he clearly saw, no man could better describe, but his eye did not take in the whole moral horizon. He was impatient of that labour of meditation and of calculation

which distinguished his celebrated friend and far-seeing instructor in all great emergencies.

His political life must be considered a failure, inasmuch as he attained for no time that power for which he had in a long career contended. He accomplished no one great measure of public policy. His name is attached to nothing that we care to remember. The credit of opposing the American war he took up chiefly from Burke as principal, and as pointing out the way for him to pursue, added to his constant teaching and prompting on the subject. So on the question of the French Revolution, the next great measure of his life. There he was overpowered by the superior judgment and genius of the latter, both at the moment of contest and ultimately in the more statesman-like views taken of it by his old master. —He was in consequence at that time left a leader almost without a party, a general without an army; public opinion having then and ever since cast the strongest reflections on his political wisdom and general conduct in that momentous crisis.

Much also has been said of his early opposition to the cause of America; to that of the dissenters; to that of Mr. Wilkes; to the rights of Juries; and in fact to every popular topic between the years 1769 and 1774. So of his coalitions, his sacrifices sometimes to popularity, sometimes to obtain party superiority, as indicative of continual inconsistencies of conduct; and that in fact Lord North made him a patriot by dismissing him with circumstances of personal indignity in 1774, from being a Lord of the Treasury. Let it be remembered however that he was then young; neither let us press public men too hardly on the point of seeming inconsistency. They are believed by the people to sin in that respect much more than they themselves can admit, and more than they themselves conscientiously believe. The reason seems to be that the change or modification of opinion proceeds in their minds gradually and imperceptibly to its completion; while to the public who know nothing of the operation going on, it comes suddenly and unexpectedly.

Yet we may ask is there any point on which a statesman may not conscientiously think differently at different times? Is there **any** one who has all his life, in office and out of office, expressed precisely the same sentiments upon all the same subjects? Is there a man of any description whose opinions on many topics, have not at some period of his life

changed? He who says the contrary deceives himself, or wishes to deceive others. The human mind does not start into maturity at once, armed at all points like Minerva from the head of Jupiter. It is progressive in the attainment of wisdom; and though the last actions of our lives may not be the wisest, there is as little doubt that men generally, as they advance in life, become wiser.*

The transitions of Burke from the contentions of public, to the kindly feelings of private life, are delightful to follow; and to omit the following appeal in favour of a poor and distressed, to an angry and richer relative, would be to sin against all the charities of the heart. It is addressed to his cousin Garret, shortly before this time—and there were many such letters from him.

“About two months ago your brother James called upon me; until then, I knew nothing of his having been in London. He was extremely poor, in a bad state of health, and with a wife, to all appearance as wretched and as sickly as he, and big with child into the bargain. It was evident enough that with his epileptic distemper, he was very unfit to get his bread by hard labour. To maintain them here would be very heavy to me; more indeed than I could bear, with the very many other calls I have upon me, of the same as well as of other kinds. So I thought the better way would be to send them back to their own county, where by allowing them a small matter, we might enable them to live. My brother was of the same opinion; so we provided them for the journey homewards; and nothing but the hurry I mentioned, prevented my desiring you to give him on my account wherewithal to buy some little furniture and a couple of cows. I then thought to have allowed him ten pounds a year. His wife told me that with a little assistance she could earn something; and thus it might be possible for them to subsist.

“This day I got a letter from him, in which the poor man tells me he is more distressed than ever; and that you

* George III. described him justly, as appears in a recent work, in March 1783, to Mr. W. Grenville, as “a man of parts, quickness, and great eloquence; but he wanted application, and consequently the fundamental knowledge necessary for business; and above all was totally destitute of discretion and sound judgment.”—*Court and Cabinets of Geo. III.* vol. i. p. 203.

showed great resentment to him, so far as even to refuse to give him any thing that I should appoint for him. I can readily excuse the first effect of warmth in an affair that must touch you so nearly. But you must naturally recollect that his indigent circumstances, his unfortunate marriage, and the weakness of his mind, which was in a great measure the cause of both, make him a just object of pity and not of anger; and that his relation to us neither confers on you nor me any right whatsoever to add to his affliction and punishment—but rather calls upon us to do all the little good offices in our power to alleviate his misfortunes.

“A little reflection will make you sensible of this; I therefore wish you would not only give him now six or seven guineas on my account, but that you would by yourself or some friend, take care that it should be laid out in the manner most beneficial for him, and not entrusted to his own management. If you are not near him, I dare say, Dav. Crotty, or Jack Nagle would look to his settlement. I can have no improper view in this; no more than in the other affair which I earnestly recommended to you and offered my assistance to conclude. But you very justly I suppose, paid no regard to my opinions or wishes; I hope you will have no reason to be dissatisfied with what you have resolved on that occasion. * * * You remember the usual allowance I have made for these two or three years to some poor persons in your county. You will be so obliging to continue it to them according to my plan of last year, which you can refer to or remember. You will not scruple to advance this for me; and I do not doubt but your good nature will prevail on you to take the trouble. As to my farming, I go on pretty well. All my wheat is in the ground this month past; which is more than some of my neighbours have been able to compass on account of the wetness of the season.”

In this year Mr. Richard Burke revisited Grenada, and made a purchase of property in St. Vincent's. The domestic affections of Edmund which were always particularly sensitive, felt in this instance some alarm from the insalubrity of the climate. The promising progress of his own son, then at Westminster School, of whom he was as proud as he was fond, gave him great satisfaction. William Burke thus repeats the usual praises of the admiring father.—“Ned's little boy is every thing we could wish, good in his person,

excellent in temper and disposition, attentive and diligent in his studies beyond his years. He has read Virgil and Horace, and some prose writers. He has gone through about four books of Homer, and is reading Lucian with really a scientific knowledge of Greek."

Dissatisfied with such scanty notices of the debates as found their way to the public ear, he now aimed a fresh projectile at public opinion in the shape of another pamphlet. To Lord Rockingham he thus writes,—“When I got home I returned to my business which I did not quite neglect while I was at Lord Verney’s. I find I must either speak very broad, or weaken the matter and render it vulgar and ineffectual. I find some difficulties as I proceed; for what appears to me self-evident propositions, the conduct and pretences of people oblige one formally to prove. * * * However a good deal of it will soon be ready and you may dispose of it as you please.” This piece which came out in April, was his famous pamphlet, “Thoughts on the Cause of the Present Discontents.” It is perhaps the most masterly thing of the kind in our language, excepting his own work on the French Revolution; a source of interest and information to statesmen; and a species of text-book then for the Whig connexion. It was not merely meant as an occasional piece, but for the instruction of posterity by the constitutional tendency of its general views, the depth and truth of its observations, which with the eloquence of the style impart that conviction of genius and wisdom which we feel in perusing all his works. It had been in his thoughts for nearly a year previously, and a portion of it written; but frequent references for the opinions of the party, some of which were introduced, and numberless interruptions prevented its earlier appearance.

In this piece will be found the germ of the leading doctrines which distinguished him in after-life. He wished to hold a mean between the extremes of what were considered the popular and the Court doctrines. Of Lord Bute he speaks with a candour and moderation which scarcely any other public man thought it necessary to observe. The attack on the secret manœuvres of the Court from a statesman labouring for power, indicated an unusual degree of political courage; nor did some opinions broached by the more democratical writers meet with more ceremonious treatment,

for which the adherents of ministry on one side, and Mrs. Macaulay of republican notoriety on the other, lost no time in attacking him. His defence of party connections has never been answered; putting to silence the hitherto common reproach applied to most public characters, of being party-men. Every part had been carefully studied and prepared. In May a copy was transmitted to Shackleton. "The pamphlet which I sent to you, and which has been well received, will explain the grounds of our proceedings better than I can do in this place. It is the political creed of our party. Many parts will be unintelligible to you, I confess, for want of knowledge of particular persons and facts; but on the whole I think you must enter into the design. Read it with some attention."

To this production, although previously passed in review before the heads of the party, Lord Chatham, as to most other things not his own, took exception. He wrote to Lord Rockingham that it had done harm to the party; and that, "In the wide and extensive public the whole alone can save the whole against the desperate designs of the Court." Again, "A public spirited union is necessary among all who would not be slaves." Strong language this from one in his position in the country; and upon the whole letter, Burke, twenty years afterward, made a pretty strong comment.*

The "False Alarm" by Johnson, on the other side of the question, appeared not only without effect but when compared with his opponent, to considerable disadvantage. No political feeling interfered with their private friendship. The good offices of both had been exerted towards the end of the preceding year in favour of Baretti, who had been tried for stabbing a man in the Haymarket, by whom he had been attacked; when in consulting on the best pleas to urge

* "July 13, 1792.—Looking over poor Lord Rockingham's papers, I find this letter from a man wholly unlike him. It concerns my pamphlet. I remember to have seen this knavish letter at the time. The pamphlet is itself, by anticipation, an answer to that grand artificer of fraud. *He* would not like it. It is pleasant to hear *him* talk of *the great extensive public* who never conversed but with a parcel of low toad-eaters. Alas! alas! how different the real from the ostensible public man! Must all this theatrical stuffing and raised heels be necessary for the character of a great man?"

EDMUND BURKE."

"Oh! but this does not derogate from his great splendid side!"—*Rockingham Memoirs. By the Earl of Albemarle, vol. ii.*

in his defence, Johnson's usual love of dictation even to Burke, appeared in contradicting him with an undue degree of warmth; an error which he acknowledged with the same frankness. On being reminded of his heat, he said, "It may be so, sir, for Burke and I should have been of one opinion, if we had had no audience."

In the summer of 1770 he suffered much disquietude from the long illness of his wife. This kept him at home; nursing at once the invalid and the farm; and thence failing, as his Irish friends accused him, of neglecting their consequence and support by not communicating his opinions and proceedings to many warm admirers there. Leland, the historian, wrote him occasionally very lively letters, and at this period wished him to negotiate with a bookseller for the publication of his Irish history then in a forward state. He criticises, likewise, the "Discontents," as wanting in a few places his usual elegance of phraseology.

While descanting in eloquent letters to Lord Rockingham on public affairs and party prospects, he was not less learnedly enlightening Arthur Young on trench-ploughing, loam soils, fattening pigs on carrots, with an account of sending two waggon loads of the latter to London of "a most aromatic smell, firm, and admirably tasted," for which he received six pounds fifteen shillings, and the back carriage of coal-ashes, paying expenses! Not a farmer in his neighbourhood had barley-meal, May butter, peas, and "porkers" more in his thoughts than the militant politician, boasting of killing pigs of sixteen and twenty pounds the quarter. Agriculture was with him not merely a pursuit, but a passion. His energy of mind seemed capable of grasping anything he took in hand. Occasional misgivings indeed arose, whether certain farming experiments were as profitable as they had promised.

The session 1770-1771, opening on the 13th November, proved a busy and important one. Never perhaps was party spirit and general disquiet more prevalent in the kingdom, excepting in states of actual disturbance. Notes of some of his speeches are to be found in Sir H. Cavendish's reports, a probable source of information pointed out in this work in 1826, and since published in part (1841), though still incomplete.

The principal of these were on the Address—on Mr.

Dowdeswell's motion on the conduct of ministers—Mr. Phipps's, on the power of the Attorney-General to file informations *ex-officio*—Serjeant Glynn's, on the powers and duties of juries—the dispute regarding the Falkland Islands, and a few others, among which was a skilful and soothing one to allay a quarrel threatening a duel, between Mr. Wedderburne and Charles Fox—for both of whom he expressed “sincere regard and affection.” After the recess his principal efforts were on the dispute with Spain; on a bill for ascertaining the rights of electors in choosing their representatives; and on Mr. Dowdeswell's on the rights and powers of juries in prosecutions for libel. The latter was wholly his own measure, submitted previously to Lord Rockingham and the heads of the party, and introduced by a member of station and weight. Lord Chatham privately opposed this bill, and wanted its modification. Burke as strenuously urged that they must not give way, as there was evident design to deprive the party of the credit of what would be one of their best and most popular measures. It is not a little curious that Mr. Fox who then likewise opposed it, took this bill nearly to the letter, for his own libel bill in 1791, as will be seen in a future page. So far was Burke in advance of the eminent men of the day, in requiring an enactment that the jury should be judges both of the law and the fact.

To this immediately succeeded the important contest between the House of Commons and the City Magistrates, grounded on the question of the printers giving the proceedings in Parliament. This great question, arising from the cupidity of a few obscure individuals, though long felt to be a grievance, terminated in securing one of the greatest constitutional privileges gained since the Revolution,—the tacit liberty of publishing the debates.

The member for Wendover embraced the popular side of the question with his accustomed zeal and ability; and when at length the House confessed itself conquered by adjourning over the day on which Mr. Wilkes was ordered to attend, he did not cease to pursue their resolutions with reproach and ridicule. On the 2nd of April, in company with the Dukes of Portland and Manchester, Marquis of Rockingham, Earl Fitzwilliam, Lord King, and others, he paid a formal visit to the Lord Mayor and Alderman Oliver in the Tower. A proposition by Alderman Sawbridge to shorten the dura-

tion of Parliaments was with equal decision opposed by him as inexpedient and uncalled for by the sense of the country. The substance of this speech has a place in his works.

In the spring of the year, Barry who had executed two or three paintings for his patron while abroad, returned from Italy not only filled with impressions of the great superiority of his art, but also with a more noxious disposition too often imbibed by long residence on the continent—an inclination to Deism. Mr. Burke, with the activity of a true friend, immediately assailed this opinion with the most powerful arguments and a few good books, particularly Bishop Butler's *Analogy*, and by these means succeeded in fixing the eccentric painter's belief in revealed religion. It is a memorable instance of the envenomed spirit abroad against this distinguished man, long afterwards, for his opposition to revolutionary France, that among other slanderous accusations of the day, was that of having been given to deistical raillery.

His acquaintance with Dr. Beattie who had arrived in London during the summer, preceded by the fame of his "*Minstrel*," and "*Essay on Truth*," perhaps incited him more strongly to convince the artist of his error. The latter work he and Johnson praised highly for its support of religion in opposition to the sceptical metaphysics of Hume. Burke's opinion of such persons is given with characteristic force in the letter to a Noble Lord when speaking of the Philosophers of the National Convention. "Nothing can be conceived more hard than the heart of a thorough-bred metaphysician. It comes nearer to the cold malignity of a wicked spirit than to the frailty and passion of a man. It is like that of the principle of evil himself, incorporeal, pure, unmixed, dephlegmated, defæcated evil." Beattie's opinion of the science is not more favourable:—"It is the bane of true learning, true taste, and true science; to it we owe all modern scepticism and atheism; it has a bad effect upon the human faculties, and tends not a little to sour the temper, to subvert good principles, and to disqualify men for the business of life."

In September 1771, Goldsmith writing to Mr. Langton, thus alludes to their friend's usual occupation:—"Burke is a farmer, *en attendant* a better place, but visiting about too." In proof of the orator's farming propensities to which the poet thus alludes, the following scientific remarks on bacon

and hogs in a letter to his cousin about this time, may be added to a former passage.

“ We have had the most rainy and stormy season that has been known. I have got my wheat into the ground better than some others; that is about four and twenty acres; I proposed having about ten more, but, considering the season this is tolerable. Wheat bears a tolerable price, though a good deal fallen: it is forty-two shillings the quarter, that is two of your barrels. Barley twenty-four shillings. Peas very high, twenty-seven to thirty shillings the quarter; so that our bacon will come dear to us this season. I have put up four hogs. I killed one yesterday which weighed a little more than twelve score. Of the other three, one is now near fifteen score, the other about twelve. I shall put up seven now for pickled pork; these weigh when fit to kill near seven score a piece. To what weight do you generally feed bacon hogs in your part of the country? Here they generally fat them to about fourteen or fifteen score. In Berkshire, near us, they carry them to twenty-five and thirty score.

“ I am now going into some new method, having contracted with a London seedsman for early white peas at a guinea a barrel. These I shall sow in drills in February, dunging the ground for them. They will be off early enough to sow turnips. Thus I shall save a fallow without I think in the least injuring my ground, and get a good return besides. A crop of such peas will be near as valuable as a crop of wheat; and they do not exhaust the soil; so little, that as far as my experience goes, they are not much inferior to a fallow. I will let you know my success in due time. * * I heard not long since from my brother, who was, thank God, very well. Let me hear from you as soon as you can. Whenever I wrote, I forgot to desire you to give a guinea from Lare* to her father at Killivellen—for my delay be so good to give him half a guinea more.”

The following passage in another letter gives us an idea of the very distant terms he was on with Lord Shelburne even from their first acquaintance in politics—and this coolness increased as they advanced in their career. Mr. Garret Nagle, it seems, wished to become agent to some of his Lordship's Irish estates; an office not disdained by many of the

* One of his servants.

country gentlemen of Ireland, to absentee and even resident noblemen. After stating his inclination to do all in his power for a young relative who wished to go to India; and a long passage on farming affairs, he goes on to say,—“Now I will say a word or two on your own business, concerning the agency you mentioned. Lord Sh. has been for many years very polite to me; and that is all. I have no interest with him whatsoever; for which reason when I received your letter, I thought it best to speak to Barré who is in close connexion with him. He had not then heard of Parker's death. He told me that he seldom or never interfered in Lord Shelburne's private affairs, and believed that if he should on this occasion, it could have no effect, but he said he would try; and that if there was any prospect of success he would let me know it. He has said nothing to me since.”

Another letter some time subsequent to this, which would occupy if transcribed, five or six pages, is wholly filled with farming affairs, more especially on the culture of the turnip, its risks, benefits and disadvantages. For this detail (he says) he has chosen a wet day, in which he can do nothing out of doors; and being addressed to a farmer, a more appropriate time or topic could not be chosen. From his account it appears he had nearly thirty acres in turnips, and in the preceding year, no less than one hundred and ten loads of natural hay; clover hay he adds sold then from thirty to thirty-six shillings the load. The truth of a remark upon cultivation will be immediately recognised by the practical farmer and furnish evidence of shrewd observation. “I am satisfied that no cheap method of tillage can be a good one. All profit of lands is derived from manure and labour; and neither of them, much less both of them, can be had but at a dear rate. I should not even consider the cheapness of labour in any particular part as a very great advantage. It is something without doubt. But then I have always found that labour of men is nearly in proportion to their pay. Here we are sixpence a day lower than within a few miles of London; yet I look upon the work there to be in effect nearly as reasonable as here; it is in all respects so much better and so much more expeditiously done.”

In the month of November, 1771, his acquaintance with American affairs was rewarded by the appointment of Agent to the state of New York, worth nearly £700. per annum.

which, though it tended on all future occasions to give him the most correct views of American affairs, diminished perhaps the effect of his oratory in the House, and of his wisdom out of doors, from an illiberal surmise that his advice might not be wholly disinterested.

The belief that he was Junius had now become almost universal. Nearly all the Ministry and most of his private friends scarcely preserved any delicacy in their allusions; some in tones of compliment, others in as strong expressions of regret. In vain he tried to undeceive all; Lord Mansfield, as one of the most serious sufferers, was for a time implacable. Sir William Draper, Mr. Gerard Hamilton, and many more moving in spheres where he was less known, could not be convinced. Even his old friend, the Bishop of Chester (Dr. Markham), imbibed the same impression, influenced by the constant and unmeasured abuse in the public journals, which the accused never descended to contradict.

To turn this current of opinions aside if possible he had in the debate on Mr. Phipps' motion, characterized Junius in those mingled terms of censure and approval, which are too well known to require repetition here, and of which Sir H. Cavendish retains only the substance in his report. To the same end perhaps he slightly complimented Lord Mansfield, or rather the Judges generally, in Serjeant Glynn's motion, and was called publicly to account for this small civility to the unpopular Chief Justice. At length Mr. Charles Townshend, brother of Mr. Thomas Townshend, (usually called in the correspondence of the day, Tommy), whose father he occasionally visited at Fragnall, thought proper in conversation and by letter to advert expressly to the question. A prompt denial, couched in moderate terms, was the natural response,—his friends he said he had satisfied: his enemies who had advanced this charge for malignant purposes, he never would satisfy. Again the same correspondent addressed him, stating that some of their friends required a more positive and direct negative; that even Bishop Markham to whom he (Burke) had written on the same topic, had expressed surprise at not receiving a more unqualified disavowal of all participation in the letters. To this irksome catechising he again replied, pledging his honour that he knew nothing whatever of the writer.

The former friendly endeavours of the Bishop to aid his

views, had given him as he imagined a species of privilege to take liberties, which about this period was exerted to its fullest extent. He addressed letters to Burke, couched in a censorious if not gross and inexcusable tone. He condemned the whole of his political career, conduct, principles, opinions, friends, and associations as bad; told him he had no claim to high office; such arrogance in a man in his condition was intolerable; terms his lead in the measures of his party as running the extreme line of wickedness; that he gives the world an impression of being a man capable of things dangerous and desperate; that in going into the House of Commons he entered like a wolf into a fold of lambs, snapping now at one and now at another; that he ill-treats the first men in the kingdom; that his house was no better than a hole of adders; and much more to the same effect. These letters have not been preserved. The offensive passages however are embodied in the reply a long and effective one, which was found among his papers, couched in the most moderate tone—that of sorrow not of anger—as if thus to convict the Bishop of error and harshness, and who had likewise accused him of being unable to distinguish admonition from reproach. It is creditable to the philosophy of the orator, that these trials of temper by the prelate, produced no permanent estrangement.

The next session, 1772, was short and produced little of importance. A petition from 250 clergymen of the Establishment and several members of the professions of law and physic, praying to be relieved from subscription to the 39 Articles and called, from their place of meeting, the Feathers' Tavern Association, he opposed in conjunction with ministry, against the opinions of nearly all his own party. His argument, among other reasons was, that while the *associators* *professed to belong to the Establishment, and profited by it*, no hardship could be implied in requiring some common bond of agreement such as the subscription in question, among its members.

Acting upon the same principle he supported a motion soon afterwards, made to relieve Dissenting Ministers who *neither agreed with the Church, nor participated in its emoluments*, from this test. It was carried through the Commons by a great majority though rejected by the Lords. The repeal of the Marriage Act, which Charles Fox quitted office for a moment to propose, was resisted by Burke, of whose speech

Horace Walpole writes:—"Burke made a long and fine oration against the motion. * * * He spoke with a choice and variety of language, a profusion of metaphors, and yet with a correctness of diction that were surprising. His fault was copiousness above measure." A bill to quiet the possessions of the subject against dormant claims of the Church, introduced the 17th of February, found in him a powerful though unsuccessful advocate, on the same principle as the Nullum Tempus Act against dormant claims of the Crown. Fragments of some of these speeches are given in his works. He also took a considerable share in Colonel Burgoyne's motion, April 13th, for a select committee on East India affairs. Again on the following day in a committee of the whole House, on a series of resolutions moved by Mr. Pownall, to regulate the importation and exportation of corn.

On the budget discussed May 1st; on a bill to regulate the internal government of the African Company; and on some amendments made by the Lords in a money clause in the corn bill, he also took part, lamenting on the latter occasion a violent disagreement which had taken place between the Houses; and pointing out forbearance and temper to the Commons as the most dignified mode of reply to the rude insults received from the Peers. The bill itself, as infringing upon the rights of the House in money matters, was tossed over the table and kicked by members on both sides of the question along the floor as they went out.

It is recorded by Boswell, that Dr. Johnson, in conversation, once made a *bull*. As a faithful chronicler, it must not be concealed by the present writer that Mr. Burke in the debate on the budget this year, used the same figure of speech to the great amusement of the House; having however the pleas of his *country*, and the heat of argument, to urge in extenuation of this usually mirthful slip of the tongue. "The Minister," said he, "comes down in state, attended by his creatures of all denominations, beasts clean and unclean. With such however as they are, he comes down, opens his budget, and edifies us all with his speech. What is the consequence? *One half* of the House goes away. A gentleman on the opposite side gets up and harangues on the state of the nation; and in order to keep matters even, *another half* retires at the close of his speech. A third

gentleman follows their example, and rides the House of *another half* (a loud laugh through the House). "Sir," said he, turning the laugh with some address and humour, "I take the blunder to myself, and express my satisfaction at having said any thing that can put the House in good humour."

East India affairs had occupied many of his studious hours, and when debated in the Commons had elicited from him what were considered sound opinions upon the condition and rights of the Company. At this period they had fallen into considerable confusion. Their decline was felt by the proprietors in the most sensitive of all points—the dividends. No arguments are so conclusive as those of pecuniary loss. To repair this deficiency by controlling expenditure where profusion had been the rule and to work out an improving revenue, ability, and character of a high order were necessary. These were found at once by the directors in the indefatigable member for Wendover. In the autumn of this year he was offered in their name by Sir George Colebrooke, the first position in a supervisorship of three, empowered to trace out in detail the whole administrative system of India, and to remedy all they could find amiss. No compliment could be greater to his talents and integrity, no proposal more advantageous to his straitened finances, but in defiance of both he declined—to the serious disadvantage of that country. The first hint of this determination was given to the Duke of Richmond, to whom after a visit to Goodwood he thus wrote:—"As I trotted toward town yesterday, I turned over in my mind the subject of our last conversation. I set it in every light I could possibly place it, and after the best deliberation in my power, I came to a resolution not to accept the offer which was made to me." One of the chief reasons probably was the silence of Lord Rockingham, who when written to by Burke and Sir G. Colebrooke, gave no answer. The inference was obvious. He could not spare the parliamentary talents of his zealous supporter; and felt too much delicacy to give a negative to what promised to be so conducive to that friend's pecuniary interests. Had the appointment been accepted, it might be curious to speculate on what would have been the result of a meeting with Hastings on Indian ground. The latter had then scarcely entered upon his career of aggression. While Burke with equal energy and decision of character, with infinitely more

of principle, more humanity, more popular talents, a leader in parliament and sure to resume that station whenever he thought proper, added to a hatred of any thing like oppression which indeed formed the leading feature of his life, it is probable that Hastings never could have accomplished, perhaps not attempted, the offences for which he was afterwards tried.

At this moment the political horizon appeared to be unclouded. The people were still. Wilkes, the printers, and the Middlesex election seemed forgotten. So unpromising were appearances for opposition, that Lord Rockingham himself proposed—not a secession—but a partial absence from Parliament as a means of arousing the country from its apathy. To this Burke at first gave a qualified assent, but soon withdrew it. His opinion proved to be that of the majority of the party, which deemed the measure now inexpedient, as it had been deemed after the Middlesex contest, when the latter made the proposal with a greater prospect of producing effect. His skill on this occasion brought forth the avowal from the Duke of Richmond,—“Indeed, Burke, you have more merit than any man in keeping us together.” While this was in progress, a brisk correspondence was kept up with the Duke, Lord Rockingham, and Mr. Dowdeswell. All of them expressed unusual fears of being exposed to prying adversaries through the medium of the Post Office, and at length one of Burke’s was opened,—a proceeding as it appeared, not uncommon in the lax official morality of the time. His letters are so full as almost to seem that letter writing was his chief business.

Parliament met in November. His first labours were on the Navy estimates and the East India Company’s affairs. His son who had been entered some time before at Christ Church, Oxford, he took to France during the recess, in order to acquire the language, as he wrote to Shackleton, “while the organs are limber. I have found the greatest inconvenience from the want of it.” Young Burke was placed at Auxerre to reside under special charge of the Bishop, to whom he had been introduced.

It was on this visit he first saw Marie Antoinette, who appeared in that glow of splendour and of youthful beauty which when afterwards depicted by his pen drew the compassion and sympathies of Europe. All the chief of those coteries since so much celebrated in literary history, were ordered to receive him; but their prevailing spirit in politics

as well as in religion, excited in his mind a strong degree of aversion. He formed but few acquaintance at this time, some of whom were ecclesiastics and afterwards his guests as emigrants.

Never perhaps were there seen together in one capital, at one time, so many men, and even women, of extraordinary intellectual powers. But the lustre which they cast upon every department of science and literature, was scarcely more remarkable than the perversion of mind which led them to despise the first and greatest bonds which hold society together. They valued everything but religion; they practised every thing but morality. Infidelity and too often vice formed their chief links of union; and the mass, splendid as it was, formed but a species of moral dung-heap, rotten and stinking at heart, but luminous on the surface by the very excess of putrefaction. Too sagacious not to see the results, the scene gave him some alarm and dislike; particularly as this disregard of morals seemed joined with antipathy to all existing institutions of their country. In the very next session of Parliament he pointed out "this conspiracy of Atheism to the watchful jealousy of governments; and though not fond of calling in the aid of the secular arm to suppress doctrines and opinions, yet if ever it was raised it should be against those enemies of their kind, who would take from man the noblest prerogative of his nature, that of being a religious animal. Already under the systematic attacks of these men I see many of the props of good government beginning to fail. I see propagated principles which will not leave to religion even a toleration, and make virtue herself less than a name." Memorable words indeed when we remember their literal fulfilment.

He did not hesitate while there, in his usual uncompromising way, to assail the prevailing opinions; to which Horace Walpole writing in March, thus jocularly alludes: "Mr. Burke is returned from Paris, where he was so much the mode that happening to dispute with the philosophers, it grew the fashion to be Christians. St. Patrick himself did not make more converts."

His labours during the remainder of the session (1773) were an animated speech on a petition of Protestant Dissenters, and several on affairs of the East India Company, in which the extent of his acquaintance with the subject were avowed by the Directors, Members of the House, to be very

honourable to his industry. A commission of supervision was at length ordered to be sent out against all the efforts of Opposition, though the Minister did not hesitate to profit by a variety of suggestions thrown out by its leader. The former always professed admiration of his talents, and it was more than once said would have been glad to secure his assistance, or his silence on any terms he chose to propose. "I attest heaven and earth," said the latter, in debate at the time, "that in all places, and at all times, I have steadfastly shoved aside the gilded hand of corruption, and endeavoured to stem the torrent which threatens to overwhelm this island." Adding, on another occasion — "I know the political map of England as well as the Noble Lord (North), or as any other person; and I know that the way I take is not the path to preferment." "I know, indeed," said he, in the first debate on the affairs of the Company (Dec. 7, 1772), "that the same qualifications now-a-days make a good member of Parliament that formerly made a good monk. '*Tria faciunt monachum—Bene loqui de superiore—legere breviarum taliter qualiter—et sinere res vadere ut vadunt.*' In English—Speak well of the Minister—Read the lesson he sets you, *taliter qualiter*, and let the state take care of itself—*sinere res vadere ut vadunt.*" This irreverent allusion to so essential a part of Popery, might almost have satisfied Sir William Bagot himself of the little respect for its forms entertained by the speaker.

The hold which he had now acquired on public opinion, and the lead taken in the popular branch of the Legislature were the best evidences of his importance and powers; for little favour is given there to any man who does not by unquestionable talents conquer his way to it.

The House of Commons is in many respects a remarkable assembly. It is not only the popular branch of the Legislature, the immediate organ and pursebearer of the people, the jealous guardian of the Constitution, the chosen temple of fame as Burke himself termed it, the main avenue to honours and power, but it is especially the great touchstone of ability for public business. A man may often deceive himself or mislead others on the real extent of his capacity for such employment, but he can rarely impose upon that body. Few know perhaps of what they are capable when they enter into it, and few come out without having found

their just weight in the political balance. It does not therefore merely serve to make a man great, but if he be really deficient in the qualities of a great statesman, it is sure to place him where he should be. Elsewhere it may be difficult to draw this invidious distinction; but there it is done silently though effectually. Rivalry is inseparable from the spot. It is in vain from the number of penetrating eyes, quick ears, emulative and jealous feelings, subtle and powerful understandings directed to all the proceedings of a member to hope that incapacity can escape detection, or mediocrity seize the palm of excellence. A dull man will soon be neglected, a superficial one seen through, a vain one laughed at, and an ignorant one despised. There is perhaps no earthly ordeal for statesmen so trying as this; and no abilities which, by passing through it with celebrity may not be taken as sterling.

But in addition to these, it serves other useful purposes. It is the great purger and purifier of political opinions. No person of moderate capacity desirous of being instructed, or of gaining from the experience of older senators what they have partly gained from their predecessors, can sit there long without being wiser, or if not, the presumption is against his understanding. If he be at all open to conviction new lights will break in upon him on almost all subjects of dispute; his prejudices, his pre-conceived and imperfect notions will be one by one removed to be re arranged in more perfect combinations elaborated in this school of practical wisdom and popular development of mind.

Nor is it less serviceable as the scourge of more vulgar political quackery. A conceited or turbulent man who may assume a high tone with the public at large on the infallibility of his remedies for national evils, no sooner goes there than he sinks into neglect or comparative insignificance. The decorum, and awe inspired by the place, commonly strike him dumb, and while silent he is safe. But if once tempted to give vent to crude schemes or unsound notions, he is assaulted by the united powers of eloquence, argument, and ridicule: and beaten, if not out of the House at least out of notice. Presumption and dogmatism on topics of general interest, deserve and meet with no quarter there; and projects, which for a time mislead even sensible men out of doors, are no sooner touched by the Ithuriel spear of the House of

Commons, than their folly or mischief becomes evident. Yet persons are sometimes found even there wholly incurable ; impenetrable to reasoning and insensible to contempt ; to whom the knife and the cautery are applied in vain to extirpate errors ; but the exceptions only prove the rule.

A brisk correspondence, as usual, was kept up during the summer with Lord Rockingham. A sporting friend in America having written for one of his Lordship's jockies, Burke remarks that if George Grenville had been alive and in office, he certainly would have made him pay export duty ! To the Duke of Richmond on a previous occasion in allusion to politics, he quoted as applicable to his Grace, the well-known boast of Wilkes, who in making love, would engage against the handsomest fellow in England provided he had a month's start of his rival to make amends for his face. Public topics necessarily formed the great staple of these letters. Among the number was a proposed tax on Irish absentees, which became whispered abroad toward the end of September; and in addition to a private communication to Lord Rockingham, eventually drew an able letter, now in his works, from Burke to Sir Charles Bingham in Dublin, who had expressly written for his opinion on the subject. This opinion proved strongly against it. Lord Charlemont and other friends to the proposal, were pretty well converted by his arguments ; and being seconded by a representation to Lord North from some of the chief proprietors resident in England on the injustice of the measure, caused it to be abandoned.

His arguments on this question appear so forcible that perhaps they are not to be answered, at least I have not seen any serious attempt to refute them. Absenteeism is an old grievance of Ireland ; and as the cry against it has been stronger lately perhaps than ever, this letter is well worthy of consideration, as proving that whatever may be the remedy for the evil, a direct tax of ten per cent on non-resident landlords as was then proposed, is not the most eligible. To Lord Rockingham he says, " I never can forget that I am an Irishman. I flatter myself, perhaps ; but I think I would shed my blood rather than see the limb I belong to oppressed and defrauded of its due nourishment. But this measure tends to put us out of our place, and not to improve us in our natural situation. It is the mere effect of narrowness and passion."

The general resistance to authority at Boston, and the destruction of the tea sent thither in consequence of the exaction of duty, made the session of 1774 an important one, in consequence of the measures adopted by the Ministry against the refractory port and province of Massachusetts. A general feeling prevailed at home, even among many members of Opposition, that some punishment was necessary. Mr. Burke however though unsupported by his party, declared decidedly against the Boston Port Bill, deprecating it in the most solemn manner as partial, severe, unjust towards the innocent; fraught with danger to our authority, and threatening to bring the question of force at once to issue. "Never," said he, "did anything give me more heart-felt sorrow than the present measure." And it proved unhappily as he expected it would do, the great turning point of American politics; but strange to say scarcely another man of talents in the House viewed the proceeding with similar alarm; another memorable instance of profound political foresight.

His private letters expressed the same language as his speeches. One of these written at this time (Feb. 1774) to the well-known General Lee then in America, but not yet suspected of intending to join the discontented in their hostility, gave his sentiments moderately, but explicitly.

"It was extremely kind of you to remember your friends in our dull worn-out hemisphere, among the infinite objects of curiosity that are so exuberantly spread out before you in the vast field of America. There is indeed abundant matter, both natural and political, to give full scope to a mind active and enterprising like yours; *where so much has been done and undone; and where still there is an ample range for wisdom and mistake*;—either must produce considerable effects in an affair of such extent and importance. *It would be no light mischief, and no trivial benefit.* When one considers what might be done there, it is truly miserable to think of its present distracted condition. But as the errors which have brought things into that state of confusion are not likely to be corrected by any influence of ours upon either side of the water, it is not wise to speculate too much on the subject. It can have no effect but to make ourselves uneasy, without any possible advantage to the public.

"Here, as we have met, so we continue, in the most perfect repose. * * * Whether the American affairs will be

brought before us is yet uncertain. Saturday, I heard the Massachusetts petition against their governor and deputy discussed before the council. It was spoken to very ably by the counsel on either side; by Messrs. Dunning and Lee, for the province; by Mr. Wedderburn, for the governors. The latter uttered a furious philippic against poor Dr. Franklin. It required all his philosophy, natural and acquired, to support him against it. I hear that the petition will be rejected. The council was the fullest of any in our memory. Thirty-five attended."

On that occasion Dr. Priestley, with whom he was acquainted, tells the following anecdote.—"Going along Parliament Street on the morning of the 29th January, 1774, I met Mr. Burke and Dr. Douglas, Bishop of Salisbury, when the former introduced us to each other as men of letters, and inquired whither I was going. I replied, I could say whither I *wished* to go, and on explaining it was to the Privy Council, he desired me to accompany him. The ante-room proved to be so full of persons on the same errand as ourselves, that I despaired even getting near the door. 'Keep fast hold of me,' said Mr. Burke, locking my arm within his, and forcing his way with much difficulty to the door. 'You are an excellent leader, Mr. Burke.' 'I wish others thought so too,' replied he. We got in among the first, Mr. Burke taking his stand behind the chair next to the President, and I next to him."

To Lord Rockingham his opinions were as usual strongly expressed. He could not account for the infatuation of the ministry and the country. A robbery of any note on Hounslow, he said, would excite more notice than the riots in America which threatened to dis sever an empire. His foresight however did not pass unappreciated. A vote of thanks passed to him from the Committee of Trade at Manchester; and another from the African Company, for his knowledge and support of various commercial measures. "With admiration and respect," the former flatteringly said, "we behold you, Sir, in the possession of the most distinguished abilities; happier still in the most patriotic application of them in the service of your country." While the statesman felt thus gratified, the father was not less so by a letter from the celebrated Madame Du Deffand with promising accounts of his son, who now she said spoke French

like his native language. She likewise sent the prize discourse of the year at the Academy, of which she requested his sincere opinion.

The parliamentary proceedings in which he took a leading part, were in perpetuating Mr. Grenville's Election Bill, which was strongly though unaccountably opposed; the budget; the Quebec Government Bill; bills for altering the government of Massachusetts; and the petitions to which they gave rise. But the distinguishing feature of the session, and the greatest effort of oratory as universally considered, which had hitherto been made in the House of Commons, or in any other popular assembly, was his speech on the 19th of April, on a motion by Mr. Rose Fuller who usually supported ministry, wholly to repeal the obnoxious tea duty. He did not rise as was often his practice, till the evening had advanced and some members were withdrawn, who on the report of his unusual brilliancy, hurried back to give frequent and audible testimonies of admiration of his eloquence though they would not give him their votes. The murmurs of applause in the gallery it is said were only restrained from bursting out by awe of the House. It was on this occasion after the delivery of a particularly powerful passage, that Lord John Townshend, who had retired thither with some friends, exclaimed aloud, "Good God! what a man this is! how could he acquire such transcendent powers?"

The plain, practical, common-sense policy, recommended in the following animated passage, drew from Mr. Sampson, an intelligent American of some weight in that country and much in the confidence of Dr. Franklin, a loud exclamation to a friend, who sat at a little distance in the gallery: "You have got a most wonderful man here; he understands more of America than all the rest of your House put together."

"Let us, Sir, embrace some system or other before we end this session. Do you mean to tax America, and to draw a productive revenue from her? If you do, speak out; name, fix, ascertain this revenue; settle its quantity; define its objects; provide for its collection; and then fight when you have something to fight for. If you murder—rob; if you kill—take possession; and do not appear in the character of madmen as well as assassins, violent, vindictive, bloody, and tyrannical, without an object. But may better counsels guide you!

"Again and again, revert to your old principles—seek peace and ensue it; leave America, if she has taxable matter in her, to tax herself.* I am not here going into the distinctions of rights, nor attempting to mark their boundaries. I do not enter into these metaphysical distinctions; I hate the very sound of them. Leave the Americans as they anciently stood, and these distinctions, born of our unhappy contest, will die along with it. They and we, and their and our ancestors, have been happy under that system. Let the memory of all actions in contradiction to that good old mode, on both sides, be extinguished for ever. Be content to bind America by laws of trade; you have always done it. Let this be your reason for binding their trade. Do not burthen them with taxes; you were not used to do so from the beginning. Let this be your reason for not taxing. These are the arguments of states and kingdoms. Leave the rest to the schools, for there only they may be discussed with safety. But if intemperately, unwisely, fatally, you sophisticate and poison the very source of government by urging subtle deductions, and consequences odious to those you govern, from the unlimited and illimitable nature of supreme sovereignty, you will teach them by these means to call that sovereignty itself in question. When you drive him hard, the boar will turn upon the hunters. If that sovereignty and their freedom cannot be reconciled, which will they take? They will cast your sovereignty in your face. No body of men will be argued into slavery. Sir, let the gentlemen on the other side call forth all their ability; let the best of them get up and tell me, what one character of liberty the Americans have, and what one brand of slavery they are free from, if they are bound in their property and industry by all the restraints you can imagine on commerce, and at the same time are made pack-horses of every tax you choose to impose,

* The opinion advanced by some persons, of American representatives being sent to the British senate, was scouted by Mr. Burke some years before. The writer of Junius's letters fully coincided with him; and in a private letter to Wilkes, Sept. 7, 1771, appeals to his authority on the question, in condemning some resolutions of the Bill of Rights Society. "If you mean that the Americans should be authorized to send their representatives to the British Parliament, I shall be contented with referring you to what Mr. Burke has said upon this subject, and will not venture to add any thing of my own."—*Woodfall's Edition*, vol. i. p. 293.

without the least share in granting them. When they bear the burthens of unlimited monopoly, will you bring them to bear the burthens of unlimited revenue too? The Englishman in America will feel that this is slavery; that it is *legal* slavery, will be no compensation either to his feelings or to his understanding."

The merits of this speech are of a high and peculiar cast; a force and truth of argument, not to be answered—ornament not more than enough—an intuitive, straight-forward wisdom, which on all great occasions, seems never to have deserted him—a range of observation which nobody else dare attempt without certain ruin to the speaker and to the subject—yet skilfully brought to bear upon the point he has in view. To this end even his digressions, his illustrations, his imagery, his narrative of measures, his exposition of our true policy, his appeals to experience, his graphic sketches of character, all forcibly tend. Nothing that comes in his way but is converted to use. His figures become arguments; and when seeming most to wander from the point, wheel round and overpower us with some new and formidable auxiliary to reason. It is what most of his speeches are, a rare combination of the constituents of eloquence such as no other orator, foreign or native, ancient or modern, has been able to give us with equal effect.

As a ready debater it added to his fame, much being unquestionably extemporaneous; and the first speech which his friends could persuade him to commit to the press. For this purpose he had the use of their notes. On the public it made a great impression although strangers were usually excluded from the debates. The censure of the opposite party was confined more to the manner than to the matter; and Lord North though he negatived the motion, appeared so confounded or convinced by the reasoning of its supporter, that early in the very next session he offered to repeal this tax, the fatal cause of so much mischief, if that would satisfy America, but the moment for concession had passed away.

About the same time his friend, poor Goldsmith, died, having scarcely finished his pleasant poem of *Retaliation*. The character of Burke is keenly and faithfully drawn, and though well known to every reader of poetry, cannot well be omitted in a memoir of him whom it describes. Allowing for that exaggeration and sarcastic pleasantry, which the occa-

sion called for, it would be difficult to comprise more wit and truth in the same number of lines.

Here lies our good Edmund, whose genius was such,
We scarcely can praise it, or blame it too much ;
Who, born for the universe, narrowed his mind,
And to party gave up what was meant for mankind.
Though fraught with all learning, yet straining his throat,
To persuade Tommy Townshend to lend him a vote ;
Who, too deep for his hearers, still went on refining.
And thought of convincing, while they thought of dining ;
Though equal to all things, for all things unfit,
Too nice for a statesman, too proud for a wit ;
For a patriot too cool, for a drudge disobedient,
And too fond of the right, to pursue the expedient ;
In short, 'twas his fate, unemploy'd or in place, Sir,
To eat mutton cold, and cut blocks with a razor. "

In another part, comparing the different members to dishes, he happily writes—

Our Burke shall be tongue, with the garnish of brains.

In the "Haunch of Venison" he again says—

— but struck one quite dumb,
With tidings that Johnson and Burke would not come ;
"For I knew it," he cried, "both eternally fail,
The one with his speeches, and t'other with Thrule,"

amid other similar allusions.

Of the lively and affectionate interest which he took in the success, both in life and in art, of his protégé Barry, abundant proofs have been already given. But he saw with great pain after the latter had been resident a short time in England, that peculiar temper and obstinate humours would in all probability mar, if not destroy, the effect of his undoubted talents. With many great and good qualities, few brother artists could live long with the painter on terms of amity. He was eccentric and self-willed ; and scarcely any man who is so is agreeable in society. He had a harshness and freedom of expression in matters of opinion, which carried him further than he meant, and frequently gave offence when perhaps offence was not intended. He had a mode of thinking and acting of his own in all things. Professing an utter contempt for money, he became often querulous and irritable at the distresses which money alone could relieve,

and felt the want of that consequence which after all, money is one of the chief means of imparting. With a great thirst for fame, he would not seek it on the terms which general opinion prescribed. The world he thought should conform to his views, and not he to those of the world. He would not submit to paint portraits, and was therefore pretty certain of never arriving either at popularity or wealth.

A humour of his at this moment, which to some might have appeared like ingratitude though such was not the case, had nearly produced a breach between him and his patron. The latter wished to sit to him for a portrait painted in order to gratify an old friend; and calling on several occasions for that purpose was put off with excuses of prior occupation or the necessity of receiving previous notice. This Mr. Burke, from incessant engagements, could not give. Two years had elapsed when the friend in question, Dr. Brocklesby, complaining of delay, and Burke having unexpectedly several hours to spare on two successive days when in town, which the painter in the indulgence of his whim would not seize as desired, at length addressed in order to rouse him, a cold and formal letter of remonstrance. This had the effect, though he still maintained that other artists required longer notice—an apology which was soon disposed of by another forcible and characteristic letter from the patron; and the picture was painted.

Shortly after this, Mr. Burke finding him busily at work when he called inquired the subject, and was told that it was a bagatelle—Young Mercury inventing the lyre, by accidentally finding a tortoise-shell at break of day on the sea-shore: “Aye,” replied the orator, with his accustomed promptitude, “that is the fruit of early rising,—there is the industrious boy!—But I will give you a companion for it—paint Narcissus wasting his day in looking at himself in a fountain—that will be the idle boy.” The picture was accordingly painted.—In the following year, the artist presented a copy of his *Inquiry into the Real and Imaginary Obstructions to the Acquisition of the Arts in England* to the same great critic, who returned a candid and favourable opinion marked by his usual discrimination, in a letter dated January 1775 from the Broad Sanctuary.

Among visitors to Gregories during the summer, were Mr. and Mrs. Thrale and his old friend Dr. Johnson; when the

latter after wandering one day over the grounds in admiration succeeded by a reverie, exclaimed—

Non equidem invideo, miror magis.

which has been construed into a passing shadow of discontent at the superiority of his friend's fortune. Johnson, however had little of envy about him. Burke nothing of the insolence of ordinary minds in prosperity to excite it. For though now leader of Opposition, the first by far in eloquence in Parliament, second to none in public talents of any kind, high in fame, in confidential connexion and friendship with the chief men of the country, these distinctions produced in him no alteration of manner. His table, society, and friendship were as open to less fortunate acquaintance as before. He had passed them by in the race of life, but did not neglect or despise those of worth or talents because they were nearly lost in the distance.

At the moment of parting when the hospitable master of the mansion was setting out on election business, another supposed equivocal speech escaped from the great moralist as he shook him cordially by the hand.—“Farewell my dear Sir, and remember that I wish you all the success which ought to be wished you, which can possibly be wished you indeed by an honest man.” There is nothing ambiguous in this. Now and then it is true he seemed to think that an honest man could scarcely wish well to a Whig; but *Mund* as he familiarly called him, seldom came in for any share in this censure. On the contrary, of his public exertions he said, “It was commonly observed he spoke too often in Parliament, but nobody could say he did not speak well, but perhaps too frequently and sometimes too familiarly.” Such, however, must always be the case with a leader of Opposition as to frequent speaking. Mr. Burke with equal regard, defended Johnson's pension this session from the attack of one of his own party, Mr. Thomas Townshend, in the House of Commons.

The doctor launching out one day in praise of his friend Burke at Mr. Thrale's at Streatham, an Irish trader who was present, delighted at hearing his countryman so much applauded by one whom he understood to be the wisest man in England, thought he might add something to this favourite subject. “Give me leave, Sir,” said he to

Johnson, "to tell you something of Mr. Burke. Mr. Burke went to see the collieries in a distant province; and he would go down Sir, into the bowels of the earth (in a bag), and he would examine every thing; he went in a bag, Sir, and ventured his life for knowledge: but he took care of his clothes that they should not be spoiled, for he went down in a bag." "Well, Sir," replied Johnson good humouredly in allusion to the repetitions of this fact, "if our friend Mund should die in any of these hazardous exploits, you and I would write his life and panegyric together: and your chapter of it should be entitled thus, '*Burke in a bag.*'"

These two remarkable men were perhaps the only persons of their age, who in acquirements or in original powers of mind could be compared with each other. They had been at first labourers in the literary vineyard; they had each ultimately risen to the highest eminence in different spheres; they preserved at all times sincere esteem for each other; and were rivals only in gaining the admiration of their country. From the first, Burke seems to have possessed a strong ambition of rising in public life far above the range accessible to mere literature or even to a profession, though that profession was the law. Johnson's views had never extended beyond simple independence and literary fame. The one desired to govern men, the other to become the monarch of their books; the one dived deeply into their political rights, the other into the matter of next importance among all nations—their authors, language, and letters.

A strong cast of originality yet with few points of resemblance, distinguish not only their thoughts, but almost their modes of thinking, and each has had the merit of founding a style of his own. Johnson, seemingly born a logician, impresses truth on the mind with scholastic, methodical precision which seldom fails effect. More careless of arrangement yet with not less power, Burke assumes a more popular manner, giving to his views more ingenuity, more novelty, and on the whole more variety. The reasoning of the former is marshalled with the exactness of a heraldic procession, or the rank and file of an army, one in the rear of another according to their importance or power of producing effect. The latter disregarding such precise discipline, makes up in the incessant and unexpected nature of his assaults what he wants in more formal array. We can anticipate Johnson's

mode of attack, but not Burke's, for careless of the order of the battle of the schools, he charges at once front, flanks, and rear! and his unwearied perseverance in returning to the combat on every accessible point, pretty commonly insures him the victory. The former argued like an academical teacher; the latter like what he was and what nature had intended him for—an orator. The labours of the former were addressed to the closet; of the latter most frequently to a popular assembly; and each chose the mode best calculated for his purpose.

Both were remarkable for subtlety and vigour of reasoning whenever the occasion required them. In copiousness and variety of language adapted to every subject, and to every capacity, Burke is generally admitted to possess the advantage. In style he has no stiffness, less mannerism, less seeming labour, and scarcely any affectation; in perspicuity they are both admirable. Johnson had on the whole more erudition; Burke, inexhaustible powers of imagination. Johnson possessed a pungent, caustic, wit; Burke a more playful, sarcastic humour; in the exercise of which both were occasionally keen or broad enough. Johnson, had his original pursuits inclined that way, would have made no ordinary politician. Burke was confessedly a master in the science. In the philosophy of it he is the first in the English language or perhaps in any other; and in practice during the long period of his public career, was second to none. Added to these were his splendid oratorical powers, to which Johnson had no pretension. With a latent hankering after abstractions, the one in logical, the other in metaphysical subtleties, both had the good sense utterly to discard them when treating of the practical business of men.

They were distinguished for possessing a large share of general knowledge, accurate views of life, social and conversational powers instructive in no common degree—and in the instance of Johnson never excelled. They understood the heart of man and his springs of action perfectly, from their constant intercourse with every class of society. Conscientious and moral in private life, both were zealous in guarding from danger the established religion of their country; and in the case of Burke, with the utmost liberality to every class of dissenters. Johnson's censures and aversions

even on trifling occasions, were sometimes marked by rudeness and ferocity. Burke, with more amenity of manners and regard to the forms of society, rarely permitted his natural ardour of feeling to hurry him into coarseness in private life; and on public occasions only where great interests were at stake and where delicacy was neither necessary nor deserved.

Viewed in every light, both were men of such powers of mind, as we rarely see, from whom no species of learning was hidden, and to whom scarcely any natural gift had been denied; who had grasped at all knowledge with avaricious eagerness, and had proved themselves not less able to acquire than qualified to use this intellectual wealth. None were more liberal in communicating it to others, without that affectation of superiority in Burke at least, which renders the acquisitions of pedants oppressive, and their intercourse repulsive. Whether learning, life, manners, politics, books, or men was the subject—whether wisdom was to be taught by precept and example, or recreation promoted by amusing and instructive conversation—they were all to be enjoyed in the evening societies of these celebrated friends.

The dissolution of Parliament in autumn threatened to leave him without a seat. Lord Verney, pressed by involvements which Burke knew and feelingly regretted, could no longer return him. Some active admirers had talked, if not decided, that he should stand for Westminster on the popular interest, and among these was Wilkes, who however on Lord Mahon's being started, forgot his own proposition, or as Burke phrases it to Lord Rockingham, "my friend found the great patriot's memory as treacherous as everything else about him." A fit of despondency at this time was only conquered by natural good spirits and determined energy. He saw only private life before him; but whether so or not, resolved that nothing should interfere with perfect independence of conduct and opinion. To the same nobleman he wrote, "Whether I ought not totally to abandon this public station for which I am so unfit, and have of course been so unfortunate, I know not. * * * Most assuredly I will never put my feet within the doors of St. Stephen's Chapel without being as much my own master as hitherto I have been, and at liberty to pursue the same course."

A glimmering of expectation had indeed flitted before him two months previously, though for the moment no more than a glimmer. The Rev. Dr. Wilson, an Irish clergyman resident for some time at Clifton Hot Wells for health, wrote him two letters, saying that several eminent merchants had him privately in view for Bristol in conjunction with Mr. Cruger just arrived from New York. Great secrecy was enjoined; but after a short time this transient hope seemed extinguished, when an offer from Lord Rockingham sent him off to the electors of Malton. A small, though not an uncommon incident of the time, diversified the commencement of the journey. Two highwaymen robbed him of ten guineas on Finchley Common, and his servant of his watch. Malton, however, was reached without further misadventure where he was duly elected its representative.

The late gleam of popularity had in the meantime grown into a flame. While expressing his acknowledgments for the honour done him, and on the point of sitting down at dinner, a deputation from the merchants of Bristol who had travelled rapidly to London and from London to Yorkshire, in search of him, arrived to propose his becoming a candidate for their city, or rather to accede to the nomination, which had been already made by the leading men there. This, to one who had occasionally shown less regard for popularity than prudence demanded, was an unexpected honour—too handsome in itself and in the mode conferred to be refused. It was an offering solely to his public merits and commercial knowledge; and the favour was enhanced by the promise of being returned free of expense, an essential consideration to a man of his confined fortune.

Obtaining the ready assent of his Malton friends to this change of destination, he set off at six o'clock in the evening of Tuesday, and travelling night and day arrived about half-past two on Thursday the thirteenth of October, and the sixth day of the poll, a distance then of about 230 miles. He drove to the house of the Mayor, but not finding him at home proceeded to the Guildhall, where ascending the hustings, and saluting the electors, sheriffs, and other candidates, he reposed for a few minutes being utterly exhausted by fatigue and want of sleep, and then addressed the citizens in a speech which met with great approbation. Richard Burke, who had gone thither from London to act in

his absence, writing October 11th, says, "Edmund did not know the face of one of the Bristolians six days ago; and on this day he knows but two."

After a contest protracted to the last moment, he was returned on the third of November. In a powerful address of thanks delivered on the occasion, he exhibited what many thought too rigid a degree of independence on being pressed as to whether he meant to vote in Parliament according to his own opinion, or to the wishes of his constituents. The question at such a moment was vexatious enough; for a negative might imply on his part something like ingratitude. But above all evasion or temporizing, he respectfully though firmly, claimed the privilege at all times of following the dictates of his own opinions and conscience. His reasons, among the more reflecting class of politicians, have set the question for ever at rest. No one has thought it necessary to add to them, or prudent to answer them; although he complained at the moment of want of time and preparation for the discussion. The speech is well worth perusal by all placed in the sometimes conflicting positions of electors and candidates.

An instance of his promptitude to seize any incident that offered to aid or illustrate his aim at the moment, was told frequently by the eminent Dissenting divine Robert Hall, as having come under his own knowledge. While canvassing Bristol, Burke and his friends entered a house where the wife of the owner was reading her Bible. "I have called, Madam, to solicit the favour of your husband's vote and interest in the present election. You, I perceive," placing his finger on a passage that caught his eye, *'are making your calling and election sure.'*"

Not so was the wit of his brother candidate, Mr. Cruger, a merchant in the American trade, who, at the conclusion of one of Mr. Burke's eloquent harangues, finding nothing to add, or perhaps as he thought to add with effect, exclaimed earnestly in the language of the counting-house, "I say ditto to Mr. Burke—I say ditto to Mr. Burke." With such an example, before him however he must have improved materially in the art of delivering his sentiments in public, for in the succeeding session he spoke on American business several times with sufficient spirit.

CHAPTER VI.

Parliamentary Business—Speech on American Conciliation—Anecdotes of Dr. Franklin, Priestley, and Mr. Hartley—Round Robin on Goldsmith's Epitaph—Epitaph on Mr. Dowdeswell.—Use of a good Speech in Parliament—Letters to the Sheriffs and two gentlemen of Bristol—To Lord Charlemont, Barry, Mr. Francis, Mr. Fox, Dr. Robertson—Speeches on the Address and Employment of the Indians—Statue proposed in Dublin—Admiral Keppel—Letter to Sir William Jones.

It was the common lot of Mr. Burke during much of his political life, to see fulfilled in the recess the predictions he had made during the preceding session. So was it with the scheme for shutting up the port of Boston, which more than realised his worst anticipations. The result was a concentration of the most turbulent spirits of the colonies into a congress, where almost at their first meeting and wholly unknown to their constituents, was laid the plan of total separation from the mother-country.

At the meeting of Parliament, Lord Rockingham again contemplated a system of inaction by Opposition, which was however successfully combated by Burke in a letter written to him in the end of December. A variety of petitions from merchants and manufacturers, deprecating hostilities, flowed into the House of Commons, which were strenuously though ineffectually seconded by the Member for Bristol. The reports which exist of four or five of the speeches on these petitions though extremely scanty, give some idea of the vehemence and ingenuity with which he opposed the hostile spirit toward America, and the variety of matter brought to bear upon the question. In concluding an animated harangue (26th of Jan. 1775,) he used a beautiful illustration which drew great applause, of an archer about to direct an arrow to the heart of his enemy, but found that in his adversary's arms was enfolded his own child. This incident he recommended with cautionary admonition to those statesmen who had in contemplation the destruction of America, unmindful that they could not accomplish so baneful a purpose, without at the same time plunging a dagger into the vitals of Great Britain. "Let your commerce," said he, "come before you—see whether it be not your child that America has in its arms—see of what value that child is—examine and consider

whether you ought to shoot—and if you must shoot, shoot so as to avoid wounding what is dearest to you in the world. —Without examining your trade you cannot do this.”

For his exertions on these occasions a handsome letter of thanks was forwarded, signed by fifteen of the principal merchants of Birmingham.

Two more important, though indirect, tributes to his public wisdom appeared soon afterward in the proceedings of the House of Lords. One, the declaratory act of 1766 said to be chiefly his and censured then by Lord Chatham, was now adopted by his Lordship as the groundwork of a plan which he brought forward in the Lords to conciliate America. The other respected the taxation of that country which Mr. Burke had so long ineffectually reprobated, when on an incidental allusion to that measure, Lords North, Mansfield, Camden, the Duke of Grafton and others, all of whom were advisers of the Crown at the time it was adopted, now to the surprise of the nation utterly and angrily disclaimed having taken any part in its origin. The subsequent evidence of Mr. Penn, at the bar of the House of Lords, also seemed to imply that America would have been quiet had things remained on the footing left by the Rockingham Administration.

Undeterred by the failure just alluded to of Lord Chatham's scheme in the House of Lords for quieting the troubles in America, Mr. Burke on the 22d of March, 1775, introduced his celebrated thirteen propositions to accomplish the same object, urged to the attempt it appears by the persuasions of Mr. Rose Fuller, whose motion for the abolition of the tea duty he had supported the preceding year. His reluctance to come forward on this occasion and the aim of the measure itself, were stated with modesty yet force. Strangers, as had been the case in others of his best speeches, were rigidly excluded by the standing orders. The public at large therefore knew imperfectly what was said. Truth thus lost its main influence, and eloquence much of its power, where few were to hear them but a hostile ministerial audience. Of this he often, sometimes humourously sometimes indignantly, complained; and it will account for the little weight for some time given to his opinions excepting by the intelligent few, who fully understood the subjects and rendered him their meed of admiration. He divided on this occasion only 78—then indeed considered a large minority.

✓Of the moral and physical character of America he had gained so perfect an acquaintance, that the sketch then drawn both of the country and people, though so many years have elapsed, is nearly as fresh and accurate as any of the present day, and is in fact sometimes quoted by those who write upon the United States. It had been as we have seen, an early subject for his pen; his opinions had been formed he expressly tells us, before he entered Parliament; the subject had been one of frequent deliberation while there; and its importance induced him favoured by his connexion with the country as colonial agent, to consult every source of information written and oral, in order to become master of the points in dispute, and guided by circumstances to point out the wisest policy for England to pursue. The case was different with the Ministry, or rather the succession of Ministries, of the day, who fitting into and out of the Cabinet like the shadowy figures of a magic lantern, had little time for maturing a plan, and scarcely for continuity of thought on the subject. -

His opinions were strengthened by various private statements received from that country, of which he had many. Among others was a long one received in January from General Lee already mentioned, so clear and comprehensive on the unanimity which actuated the American people in the spirit of resistance, their military feeling and resources, that it must have made no small impression on an inquiring statesman, though tinged perhaps by some republican feelings in the writer. Its spirit however was deprecatory, not hostile; and the results proved his anticipation but too true.

The views of Burke on the general question at this time may be stated in a few words, as by some who even profess to write history, they are sometimes misrepresented or misunderstood.

✓America had imperceptibly become a great country without seeming to aim at, or scarcely to know it—formed for strength as some men are born to honours by a decree beyond their own control. It was unwise to irritate her to hostile exertion of this strength by injudicious imposts, when her natural inclination was for peace and trade; she might be influenced by mildness and persuasion, but would probably resist any thing resembling arbitrary command.

He contended for the general supremacy of Parliament and the imperial rights of the Crown as undoubted, though these should be exercised with great reserve over, not a colony but a nation, situated at a great distance and difficult if it were at all possible, to coerce. In compliance with the unanimous feeling of the people of that nation, all the internal details especially that of taxation, should remain as hitherto with their provincial assemblies; that a parliamentary revenue such as now aimed at, was next to impossible. England had never enjoyed and never would enjoy, a direct productive revenue from any colony, but at all events to trust for it rather to voluntary grants as in Ireland, than to authoritative requisitions: that all harsh acts be repealed: that the colonies be placed on the same footing toward the mother-country as in 1766; that a feeling of friendly concession alone could govern a people free in spirit and in fact, spread over a vast extent of country, and increasing at an unusual rate in numbers. Peace should be sought in the spirit of peace, not in severe parliamentary enactments; and quoted as examples of the success of lenient measures, the instances of Ireland, Wales, Chester, and Durham: that the rights of taxation being relinquished, all moderate men would be conciliated; but if more than all these should be required, then it would be time for us to turn round with a decided negative.

The speech by which the propositions were recommended, known as that on American Conciliation, excited general admiration, and in power did not fall short of that of the preceding year. Lord Chatham, when asked his opinion at the time, replied, "it is very seasonable, very reasonable, and very eloquent." Mr. Fox nearly twenty years afterwards, applying its views to Parliamentary Reform said, "Let gentlemen read this speech by day, and meditate upon it by night; let them peruse it again and again, study it, imprint it on their minds, impress it upon their hearts—they would there learn that representation was the sovereign remedy for every evil." ✓

Lord Erskine also at Edinburgh, touching on the same theme observed, "It could only proceed from this cause (the alleged corruption of Parliament), that the immortal orations of Burke against the American war did not produce as general conviction as they did unmingled admiration." This perhaps

was not wholly correct. Mr. Burke himself, when removed from the heat of debate more than once candidly confessed, that the country gentlemen wanted a partner in bearing the burden of taxation; the King wished to see obedient subjects rather than independent allies; the body of the nation which was as jealous of undisputed sovereignty as either, fully seconded their views; and the wisdom of the House of Commons alone unsupported by the people, at length put an end to the contest.

Towards the close of the session after three months almost daily discussion of American affairs, he presented a remonstrance from New York, hitherto a quiet and loyal colony, upon the harshness shown to her sister states. This met with the same reception from the Ministry as the other innumerable petitions and agents did from Lords, Commons, and Privy Council; that is, few of them were received and none deigned to be answered.

In the mean time, first blood was drawn in the colonies at Lexington and Concord; followed by the fight of Bunker's Hill; the raising of regular armies; the appointment of General Washington as Commander-in-chief; and other consequent measures, which left the chance of accommodation nearly hopeless. The rejection of all petitions tended much to alienation of the public feeling in America; increased perhaps by the severity shown to so popular a man as Dr. Franklin before the Privy Council the preceding year, on the Massachusetts petition against the governor and deputy-governor of the province. To this Mr. Burke had alluded in the letter to General Lee in 1774, without venturing to comment on it with his usual prophetic ingenuity and force.

Dr. Franklin whom he had known for several years, gave, for so wary a politician, an unusual proof of esteem and confidence, by calling upon him in April of this year (1775), the day previous to finally quitting London, and opening his mind without apparent reserve. The doctor said he looked to the approaching contest with the most painful feelings. Nothing could give him more sorrow than that separation between the mother country and colonies, which now seemed inevitable from the obstinate and unaccommodating temper of England; adding, that America had enjoyed many happy days under her rule previous to this unhappy dispute, and might possibly never see such again.

Among ourselves, dissensions on account of this agitating topic ran high. The old distinctions of Whig and Tory were revived with all their original acrimony, and Mr. Burke as the oracle of the former, came in for a large share of censure, particularly from Dean Tucker, who represented him as the most artful reasoner living; one who could amuse with tropes, and figures, and fine words, without allowing his design to be seen, till he had entrapped the hearer or reader irrecoverably in the meshes of his argument. Other political writers joined in the cry, who admitting his extraordinary powers, affected to consider them degraded by his becoming so determined a party man, and partizan of the contumacious colonies.

Several even of his friends inconsiderately appeared to join in the latter opinion, as if it were possible for any leading English statesman to be otherwise than what is termed a party man. He who expects to lead in political life must of a necessity on first entering into it, either form a party of his own or attach himself to one of the two great divisions in the state. Though the choice of such associates rests with himself, it is oftener determined, especially among young men of rank, by the politics of his friends or family connexions. Should he profess perfect independence on all points, he will find little or very hollow support in an assembly where above all others, some certain support is necessary. Without it, he cannot calculate on the humble merit of being merely useful, and certainly cannot become great. With a party on the contrary, he may rise into consequence. He has the advantage of profiting by older heads and minds equal if not superior to his own; and to use the language of Burke on another occasion, "he who profits by an equal understanding, doubles the power of his own." Scarcely any man jumps into Parliament an able statesman, more than he can start at the bar with his first brief an accomplished lawyer, or enter the field with his ensign's commission a finished soldier. He must first learn to submit and to serve, and in time may acquire the skill to command. It is useless, therefore, to complain of a politician being a party man. We may as well complain that the independence of the limb is sacrificed by being affixed to the body, without remembering that it is union alone which makes either useful.

Among his other labours was that of drawing up protests for the opposition Peers, two of which were required in

February by the Duke of Richmond ; and there is no doubt that he furnished all that proceeded from the Rockingham party up to the death of the Marquis. During the summer, he made a short excursion to Bristol, rather to please his constituents than himself, besides a few visits to some of the influential members of the party. But from an extensive correspondence on various subjects, it would seem as if he was rarely without a pen in his hand. Complimentary letters and in return occasional dedications of books were not wanting. Lord North sometimes was civil enough to give him notice of approaching motions ; Dr. Franklin wrote from Philadelphia that his health formed a toast at their dinners ; Mrs. Dowdeswell requested an epitaph for her husband ; Lord Rockingham the draught of a general protest from opposition Lords against the measures of Ministry ; Lords Abingdon and Craven the form of a petition from Berkshire ; the Duke of Richmond, and some eminent mercantile men wrote letters expressive of their admiration of his wisdom and eloquence ; while the former in evidence of his sincerity begged of him to sit to Romney for his picture. Nothing could be more flattering than the universal estimate formed of his powers. He seemed to be thought capable of doing everything well, and his shoulders sufficiently strong to bear any amount of labour. He would not however comply with the wish of the American Congress and its agents in London to present their petition to Lord Dartmouth, on the ground that New York for which he acted had not joined the Congress. One of his observations at this time exhibits the degree of foresight evinced on all great questions. Lord Rockingham had written to him that the King and people would soon see the error of their conduct to America. His reply was,—“I do not think that weeks, or even months, or years, will bring the Monarch, the Ministers, or the People, to feeling—such a feeling I mean as tends to amendment or alteration of system.”

His father-in-law Dr. Nugent, died in Suffolk Street in November, a worthy and intelligent man, who Dr. Johnson not only loved, but used to profess himself proud of believing he stood high in his esteem. He was the author of a new theory of Hydrophobia, and is often mistaken for Dr. Nugent, who published his travels, a translation of Benvenuto Cellini, and other works. In December, he lost another valued friend and warm admirer in Admiral Sir Charles Saunders.

pronouncing on the same evening, an animated apostrophe to his memory in the House of Commons.

The coercive spirit manifested in the Address at the opening of the session, brought him forward in a forcible appeal to the House to pause in measures of force; supplicating Ministry to assume some other tone than that of violence,—not to let England come to the discussion, like the irritated porcupine with its quills, armed all over with angry acts of Parliament. Several petitions from the clothiers of Wiltshire gave him the opportunity of proposing, on the 16th of November, 1775, a new conciliatory scheme, grounded on the model of the statute of Edward I. *de tallagio non concedendo*.

Three plans he said were afloat for quieting America. First, simple war in order to a perfect conquest; secondly, a mixture of war and treaty; thirdly, the best and in his opinion only practicable mode, peace founded on concession. Among other things he suggested the renunciation of taxation, the repeal of all obnoxious laws since 1766, a general amnesty and recognition of the Congress, in order to a final adjustment of grievances. A change in all these points he would not conceal, necessarily involved a change in the Ministers who had brought the country into the dilemma. Of this speech which occupied three hours and twenty minutes in the delivery, and was said by many who heard it to possess singular vigour and originality embracing a vast compass of matter British and American, only a poor abstract remains. It brought forward all the talents of the House in a spirit of emulative ingenuity, to the discussion; and the division was the strongest that Opposition had been yet enabled to muster on the American question, the numbers against the previous question being 105 to 210. In the peroration he said he was confident both from the nature of the thing and from information which did not usually fail him, that this bill would restore immediate peace; and as much obedience as could be expected after so rude a shock given to the authority of government, and so long a continuance of public heats and disturbances.

Four days afterwards, the bill to prohibit all intercourse with America, known by the name of the Starvation Plan, received his unqualified reprobation. Petitions from the West-India and Nova-Scotia merchants stating their utter

to be the consequence of it, were so cavalierly treated, he moved an ironical resolution, in substance that the se, knowing all things relative to America, required no information. Mr. Wilkes's motion for Reform he sed; a humane measure of his own, for saving from edation seamen and vessels wrecked, failed; as did her conciliatory scheme for America which he supported, posed by Mr. David Hartley.

his gentleman, representative for Hull, a very honest man, und Whig, and an indefatigable politician, was a long- lled and heavy orator; so dull indeed, that the period of rising often became a signal to desert the benches. ing some time after this thinned a full House down to a dozens, he unexpectedly called for the Riot Act to be l, to support or to explain something in the march of his ument. Mr. Burke, who sat near him, and had anxiously ted to speak to the question, could contain himself no ger, but jumping up, gave vent to his impatience by an sistibly comic remonstrance that drew peals of laughter n all present, and which Lord North afterwards used to ate as one of the happiest instances of prompt wit he had r heard—"The Riot Act! my dear friend, the Riot Act! what purpose? don't you see that the mob is completely persed?"

That conciliatory measures were not altogether hopeless, twithstanding acts of Congress to inflame the public mind America, may be inferred from the difficulty with which the clARATION of independence, in July of this year, was carried that assembly itself—one of the most curious facts perps in modern history. Six states voted for, six against at measure; and the delegates of Pennsylvania were equally vided in opinion, when at length a member who had therto opposed it, suddenly changed sides and decided the uestion. This hesitation among a body to avow in form ad name that authority and independence which it possessed fact—which had raised armies, fought battles, levied imsts, and resisted the mother country by vote, injunction, clamation, and every other possible mode, forms proof that e passions of moderate men, excited for a moment by the ts of the more designing, shrunk from the ultimate con- quences of their own violence. It is an equal proof that e conduct of the English Ministry was unhappily deficient

in wisdom, moderation, and address; for otherwise, so nicely poised must have turned in the favour of their country.

Some letters in the newspapers this summer, under signature of Valens, noticed by Burke in his correspondence were attributed to him, though said to be really written by William Burke, who spoke in the House occasionally between 1768 and 1774, but found himself much better qualified to wield his pen than his tongue.

The judgment of Edmund on topics not political pretty well estimated even in Downing Street, for we find this period his opinions on the employment of convict labour in England sought by Mr. William Eden then in office afterwards Lord Auckland. With Mr. Champion, a merchant of Bristol and one of his strenuous supporters, a confidential and frequent correspondence was kept up during this and several subsequent years. The Duke of Richmond gave him a letter of several pages from France; in October he likewise applied to him for a protest; and an amendment to an address, probably suggested by his Grace or Lord Rockingham, appears in his papers.

Fatigued no doubt by incessant political thinking and wrangling, he sought frequent relief in the literary society of which he was always so fond. Mr. Arthur Young, going on his well-known tour through Ireland, received from him a letter of introduction to Lord Charlemont, remarkable for its elegance of expression, and for some of the sentiments on matters connected with the war.

At a literary dinner party at Sir Joshua Reynolds's about this time, Johnson's epitaph on Goldsmith became the subject of conversation, when various emendations being proposed, and it being agreed that an English would be more appropriate than the Latin one, as well as more consonant to the known opinions of their deceased friend, the only difficulty was who should undertake the task of announcing this act of learned rebellion towards one whom Smollett happily called, "The great Cham of literature."

A round-robin, in the manner of discontented sailors, so to conceal the party who first signs the remonstrance, was jocularly proposed, was in the same spirit adopted. Dr. Bernard, Dean of Derry and afterwards Bishop of Limerick, drew up one accordingly replete with wit and humour. This however being deemed to exhibit more levity than Johnson

would like, Mr. Burke seized the pen, and promptly produced the following, which, as Boswell remarks, shows the facility and ease with which he handled smaller matters as well as the greatest.

"We, the circumscribers, having read with great pleasure an intended Epitaph for the monument of Dr. Goldsmith, which, considered abstractedly, appears to be, for elegant composition and masterly style, in every respect worthy of the pen of its learned author, are yet of opinion, that the character of the deceased as a writer, particularly as a poet, is perhaps not delineated with all the exactness which Dr. Johnson is capable of giving it. We therefore with deference to his superior judgment, humbly request that he would at least take the trouble of revising it, and of making such additions and alterations as he shall think proper upon a farther perusal. But if we might venture to express our wishes, they would lead us to request that he would write the Epitaph in English rather than in Latin; as we think that the memory of so eminent an English writer ought to be perpetuated in the language to which his works are likely to be so lasting an ornament: which we also know to have been the opinion of the late doctor himself."

Round the circle in which this was written were signed the names Edm. Burke, Thos. Franklin, Ant. Chamier, G. Colman, W. Vaskell, J. Reynolds, W. Forbes, T. Barnard, R. B. Sheridan, P. Metcalf, E. Gibbon, Jos. Warton. Sir Joshua¹ carried it and received for answer from Johnson, "that he would never consent to disgrace the walls of Westminster Abbey with an English inscription."—"I wonder," said he, "that Joe Warton, a scholar by profession, should be such a fool;" adding, "I should have thought 'Mund Burke too would have had more sense.'"

The terms in which this literary petition was couched indicate Mr. Burke's regard for Dr. Johnson's feelings, which on such matters were sometimes irritable; and Johnson in turn, though in general little prone to consider the sensibilities of those he addressed, exhibited due consideration to those of Burke. When Goldsmith talked on one occasion of the difficulty of living on very intimate terms with a person from whom you differed on an important topic, Johnson replied, "Why Sir, you must shun the subject as to which you disagree. For instance, I can live very well with Burke; I love his knowledge, his genius, his diffusion, and affluence of conver-

sation; but I would not talk to him of the Rockingham party." On the question of epitaphs, Burke conceived the vernacular language of a country to be the most fitting for such inscriptions, for though possibly not so durable as the Latin, yet sufficiently so to be intelligible whether to the learned or unlearned classes as long as it was likely to be preserved. The Greeks he urged used no Latin, and the Latins no Greek inscriptions. His own practice invariably accorded with this opinion. That on Lord Rockingham, Mr. Dowdeswell, Sir George Savile, and the character of Sir Joshua Reynolds, are instances in point. It has been said that he wrote one for Lord Chatham.

A flattering and unsolicited compliment to his integrity came early in this year from his old friend the well-known Mrs. Montagu. Hearing that some of his friends in the city meant to start him for the Chamberlainship which was then vacant, she wrote off at once to say that as heavy sureties were necessary, she begged to be considered as one of the number. The total amount then was £40,000. But this and other testimonies of private regard could not divert feelings of gloom from public subjects. Writing to Shackleton in August, he says—"We are deep in blood. We expect to hear of some sharp affair every hour. God knows how it will be. I do not know how I can wish success to those whose victory is to separate from us a large and noble part of our empire; still less do I wish success to injustice, oppression, and absurdity."

The tenor of the Address (1776-77), and a motion by Lord John Cavendish, Nov. 6, 1776, respecting a proclamation of General Howe at New York, drew from Mr. Burke in an animated address some warm remarks; for which the great interests at stake and the decided conviction of our whole system of policy being wrong, forms the best apology.

Towards Christmas, a resolution was again started by the Rockingham party to secede from Parliament on all questions connected with America, utter silence on their part being deemed the next best step to disregarded admonition. An Address to his Majesty explanatory of their views and reasons proposed to be presented in form by the leading members of both Houses, and another of similar tenor to the colonies, were drawn up by Mr. Burke, and appear in his works. The former is a bold, dignified, and elaborate paper; the latter perhaps not quite so good. It is certain the design did not originate

with him. But when applied to for his sentiments, a letter to the Marquis of Rockingham, dated Jan. 6th, 1777, seems to approve the design. At the same time the objections are so fully stated, with so clear a foresight of the probable consequences, remote and immediate, and the little hope of being effectually accomplished in consequence of the clashing interests of the minority, that the reader is impelled to draw a directly opposite conclusion to that of the writer. So thought the Marquis. The interview with the King, the delivery of the memorial, and the attempt at positive and general secession, such as at first contemplated, were abandoned. He however did not attend or would not speak as often as usual: for writing in February, 1777, to Mr. Champion, he says, "I stay from this as I do from all public business, because I know I can do no sort of good by attending."

That such a decisive measure never can be proper under any circumstances, is perhaps saying too much. That it should be often resorted to, or in any but some formidable and pressing necessity, may perhaps indicate more of irritation than of wisdom. The crisis was certainly one of the most momentous ever experienced by the country; yet to secede under such circumstances, was not to meet, but to fly from the danger; and in the then temper of the nation, could have only drawn disapprobation from one half of the people, and, probably ridicule from the other. Persuasion may in time do much, but silence can make few converts. To desert the field is not the way to subdue the enemy. Frequent failure in opposing what he may think the worst policy and in accomplishing his own most conscientious designs, are natural conditions in the existence of a Member of Parliament; for which he who does not come prepared has not adequately considered the obligations of the office.

A leader of Opposition indeed may imagine that in debating, he is only playing the game of the Minister, in throwing out hints from which the latter so far profits as to be enabled to prolong his power. It is also extremely discouraging to be constantly out-voted, when possibly not out-argued; to spend time, labour, and ingenuity, "to watch, fast, and sweat night after night," as Burke himself forcibly expresses it, and not emerge from the slough of constant minorities. No person felt this more than he who complained of it. Yet none has more ably stated the necessity, and even

advantages resulting to the country and to the members so situated from a well-directed opposition than he has done, in a conversation with Sir Joshua Reynolds.

"Mr. Burke," said the painter, "I do not mean to flatter; but when posterity reads one of your speeches in Parliament, it will be difficult to believe that you took so much pains, knowing with certainty that it could produce no effect; that not one vote would be gained by it." "Waiving your compliment to me," replied the orator, "I shall say in general that it is very well worth while for a man to take pains to speak well in Parliament. A man who has vanity speaks to display his talents; and if a man speaks well, he gradually establishes a certain reputation and consequence in the general opinion, which sooner or later will have its political reward. Besides, though not one vote is gained, a good speech has its effect. Though an Act of Parliament which has been ably opposed passes into a law, yet in its progress it is modelled, and softened in such a manner that we see plainly the Minister has been told, that the members attached to him are so sensible of its injustice or absurdity from what they have heard, that it must be altered."

"The House of Commons," he continued in reply to some other remarks, "is a mixed body; I except the minority, which I hold to be pure (*smiling*), but I take the whole House. It is a mass by no means pure, but neither is it wholly corrupt, though there is a large proportion of corruption in it. There are many members who generally go with the Minister who will not go all lengths. There are many honest well-meaning country gentlemen who are in Parliament only to keep up the consequence of their families. Upon most of these a good speech will have influence." Again in allusion to this topic when it was remarked, there were always in Parliament a majority, who from various motives, interested and disinterested, inclined to the support of government, he observed, "True, Sir, that majority will always follow—

"Quo clamor vocat et turba faventium."

Sir Joshua asked what would be the consequence if a Minister sure of a majority, were to resolve that there should be no speaking at all on his side? The reply was, "He must soon go out. That plan has been already tried, but it was found it would not do."

His position at this time with those who supported the war was somewhat peculiar, though to a public man not unexpected. He had been long bitterly reviled as the factious though eloquent advocate of rebellious America. He was now, for such is political hostility, almost equally censured for preserving on the same subject what was termed a factious silence. Occasionally Lord Rockingham was as much sneered at by the ministerial writers for being directed by an Irish Secretary, as the King had recently been abused by Opposition for being under the supposed influence of a Scottish favourite.

To explain more at large to his constituents—to one of whom his friend Mr. Champion it was transmitted in manuscript—his reasons for seceding, and his general views on American matters, he drew up and published in April, 1777, the famous “Letter to the Sheriffs of Bristol.” This is one of his best pamphlets, and though written for a momentary purpose, contains within it principles as to public matters of enduring value. He condemns by allusion, rather than in direct terms, the speculations of Drs. Price and Priestley which went to destroy all authority, as well as the deeds of those who fell into the other extreme of enforcing it beyond due discretion. It is couched in a warmer strain than he had hitherto employed against the authors of the war; and the following solemn warning is only one among many instances of the prophetic spirit displayed in this as in most other great questions of his day.

“I think I know America. If I do not, my ignorance is incurable, for I have spared no pains to understand it: and I do most solemnly assure those of my constituents who put any sort of confidence in my industry and integrity, that every thing that has been done there has arisen from a total misconception of the object; that our means of originally holding America, that our means of reconciling with it after a quarrel, of recovering it after separation, of keeping it after victory, did depend, and must depend, in their several stages and periods, upon a total renunciation of that unconditional submission which has taken such possession of the minds of violent men.”

Previous to publication it was shown for the approval of the party to Lord Rockingham, Sir George Savile, Mr. Fox, and Mr. Ellis. A reply to it came from the eccentric Earl of

Abingdon, also a member of Opposition, who educated at Geneva, had caught something of the spirit of democracy, and with more zeal than discretion or patriotism is said to have made a present to Congress of an estate which he possessed in America. In the House of Lords he possessed little weight. In the press he made a still worse figure against such an opponent, who on the piece being announced in the press wrote him a private letter, but gave no public reply;—a mark of neglect which nettled his lordship not a little;—though an anonymous writer assailed and exposed him with considerable powers of ridicule.

In the midst of this political bustle, a claim was made upon his opinion in a matter of taste. That extraordinary character Barry, who possessed neither time that he could justly spare, nor wealth to support him in its progress, had undertaken to decorate the great room of the Society of Arts with paintings gratuitously, and now solicited Mr. Burke to communicate his ideas on the most appropriate designs. From the answer to this application, there is little doubt that whatever merit there be in those great works, some portion of it is due to him; the remark of Dr. Johnson when he saw them in 1783 being, "Whatever the hand may have done, the mind has done its part. There is a grasp of mind there which you will find nowhere else." The reply ran thus.

"Mr. Burke presents his best compliments to Mr. Barry, and begs pardon for making use of another's hand in giving him his thanks for the great honour he has done him by inscribing to him the print of Job; as well as for the prints sent to his son Richard of the other five designs: but being obliged to go out in great haste, after having been engaged in business for the whole morning, he is under the necessity of dictating this note while he is dressing.

"Mr. Barry does him too much honour in thinking him capable of giving him any hints towards the conduct of the great design in which Mr. Burke is very happy to find he is engaged. Mr. Burke is, without any affectation, thoroughly convinced that he has no skill whatsoever in the art of painting; but he will very cheerfully turn his thoughts towards recollecting passages of modern or middle history, relative to the cultivation of the arts and manufactures; and Mr. Barry will judge better than he can, whether they are such as will answer his purpose.

"Mr. Burke will have the pleasure of waiting on Mr. Barry, to communicate to him what occurs to him on the subject, at his first leisure moment."

The arrears of the Civil List, and an increase of its annual amount, brought him forward again, severely censuring the wastefulness of Ministry. His interposition, in a happy mixture of argument and irony, saved Alderman Sawbridge, whose language was indecorous and disrespectful towards his Majesty, from public reproof. It was on this subject that the speaker (Sir F. Norton), made his well known speech to the King, which gave such offence—"that your Majesty will apply wisely, what they (the Commons) have granted liberally." The motion for its approval was written by Burke and moved by Fox, amid much confusion.

On another occasion an opponent was soon afterwards silenced by his wit. During one of the debates on Lord Pigot's recall from Madras, he had twice given way to other speakers, when observing the Chairman of the India Company proceeding to read a variety of well-known public papers instead of adducing any new arguments, he interrupted him by observing, "That if it were the object of the honourable member to tire and thin the House by reading all the heavy folios on the table, he supposed in courtesy he must submit; but to prepare for the task, he begged leave to send for his night-cap;" which producing general laughter, was followed by a shout to him of—"go on! go on!" In discussing this subject in a very masterly manner, in connexion with the treatment of Lord Pigot by the contradictory votes of the proprietors of India Stock, he was cheered in an unprecedented manner, exciting in the language of contemporary writers, "such sudden and extraordinary bursts of approbation as were not warranted by the usual practice of the House." These in return produced some sharp animadversions from the other side, "that the wit displayed in turning the Company's late resolutions and conduct into ridicule, was as ill-placed and as improperly applied, as the theatrical applause which it produced was irregular and indecent."

It was on this question that he first threw out doubts on the conduct of Mr. Hastings; partly through communications from the Pigot family, partly from other friends resident in India. Among these was the late Sir Philip (then Mr.) Francis, a man of talents, independent mind with an abhorrence of any thing resembling oppression little inferior to

that of Mr. Burke himself, and as has been said the supposed writer of Junius. To this gentleman with whom he had been early acquainted, he wrote on the rising of Parliament, strenuously recommending to his good offices his friend and associate William Burke, then proceeding to India to better his fortune. This gentleman soon became Agent to the Rajah of Tanjore, afterwards Deputy Paymaster-General for India, and is supposed to have supplied Edmund with much and minute information respecting that country.

To Mr. Fox, who with Lord John Townshend spent the summer in Ireland in order to gain a nearer view of its interior politics, he wrote a confidential and interesting letter in October on the state of parties, giving the most friendly and disinterested advice on the best line of public conduct for him to pursue, and stating in his clear and impressive manner his opinion of the state of public feeling in England regarding the Whig party. It is printed in his works. In addition to this his chief letters during the year were to Lord Rockingham; Mr. Champion, Sir Abraham Elton, and others of Bristol; General Oglethorpe; Mr. Baker, member for Herts; to Lord North on African matters; and a few others. To the General he acknowledges "the most flattering mark of honour which I ever received," but the nature of this offering is unknown. Mr. Baker, whose regards seemed as strong as some of his public opinions, compliments him as "the great philosopher of Beaconsfield," and "one of the most amiable and illustrious characters of the age."

A sketch of him appeared shortly before this in one of the journals where others of the distinguished public men of the day were hit off, which with some censure as a party man and oracle of the Rockinghams, as well as of his manner as an orator, does justice to his powers. It is too long for quotation here, and one passage may suffice:—

"No man in this country is so well qualified by nature and education to be Minister of the House of Commons. Mr. Burke's powers of persuasion would on some particular occasions be irresistible if not counteracted or resisted by the weight and solidity of the precious metals. His sources of knowledge are extensive and inexhaustible; and his materials drawn forth with great judgment. His memory is faithful and his mind teems with the most luxurious imagery, clothed in the most elegant language, and apt and happy mode of expression. His details often are interesting and important,

but always correct ; his arguments plausible, generally logical, replete with information, and never supported on designed misrepresentation, or random assertions to answer the temporary purposes of debate. His facts are seldom assumed, and when they are, he founds them on certain current opinions, perhaps controverted, but known however to exist. This candour at once renders him the fairest adversary, and stamps his speeches with a certain air of credit, veracity and authority seldom due to his contemporaries in either house of Parliament. His knowledge of parliamentary business is so vast and multifarious, that there is no subject that comes under discussion, whether politics, finances, commerce, manufactures, internal police, &c., with their divisions and subdivisions which he does not treat in so masterly and technical a manner as to induce such as hear him to imagine he had dedicated a considerable portion of his life to the investigation of that particular subject."

A present from Dr. Robertson, of his History of America then recently published, drew from Mr. Burke an interesting letter critical and complimentary in allusion more especially to his own favourite topic, the study of human nature. He considered this the most useful of all studies to historian or politician, and was accustomed to say, that "a statesman deficient in this knowledge was not master of half his business." Contrary to the opinion of Johnson, who spoke slightly of this author and who in fact cared little for such subjects, he was with Burke a favourite, at least as to manner. Not so Gibbon; on the appearance of whose first volume the preceding year he called on Sir Joshua Reynolds, and in the hearing of Northcote, pronounced the style vicious and affected, deformed by too much literary tinsel and frippery; a sentence which many competent judges have since confirmed.

The next session, 1777-1778, brought back the seceders of Opposition to the performance of their public duties. Those of Mr. Burke, were this year unusually diversified and fatiguing. His seat at least was not a sinecure. Whatever else he spared, he never spared himself. He seemed often to be trying the experiment what compass of political interest and business it was possible for the human mind to embrace and retain; what degree of labour in expounding them to endure. A few of the leading points are alone necessary to be alluded to here. On the first day of the

session, November 18th, his address was thus noticed by a contemporary—"If it were possible, we would give a detail of a speech which, for the space of nearly two hours, commanded the attention, and excited in lighter parts the laughter of all, and in the pathetic, drew tears from the sympathizing few."

The navy estimates; an inquiry into the state of the nation; the ordnance estimates; the raising of troops without consent of Parliament; and private aids to the Crown, furnished him with opportunities for assailing the war and its conductors with great effect. On one of these occasions, the fate of General Burgoyne's army (Dec. 3rd,) an incident occurred in his parliamentary life of which we have no other instance. "There were high words" writes Mr. Crawford to Lord Ossory * "between Wedderburne and Burke which so offended the latter that he went out of the House, and I believe intended to challenge Wedderburne, but was prevented by a letter from Wedderburne and an explanation likewise which he sent through Charles"—(Fox). He had it appears, laughed at a part of Wedderburne's speech when dead silence reigned in the House, so that it was heard; this produced irritation, followed by what he understood to be either rudeness or a personal threat; and thence the misunderstanding, which however was soon forgotten by both.

On the 6th of February he introduced a motion for papers relative to the military employment of the Indians in the war in America, by a speech three hours and a half long, which excited not only extraordinary testimonies of admiration, but was considered by those who heard it the best he had ever delivered. The theme, as connected with the dictates of humanity possessed much interest, and in itself was peculiarly fitted to display some of his most popular qualities as a speaker. Strangers being as usual excluded from the gallery, no tolerable report or even abstract of it, has ever been published or perhaps preserved; and thus we may often account for the little effects of his eloquence. The pathetic episode of Miss Macrae, a young lady betrothed to a British officer, and entrusted to two Indians to convey her to a place of safety, but who, quarreling by the road about the division of the expected quantity of rum promised as their reward, savagely murdered her at once to

* Memorials and Correspondence of Fox by Lord John Russell, vol. I.

end the dispute—was so vividly painted as to excite an emotion of abhorrence against such auxiliaries throughout the country.

Heated by the fervour of the speaker, Colonel Barré in a fit of enthusiasm, offered to nail up the speech if published on every church door in the kingdom by the side of the proclamation for a general fast. Governor Johnstone thought it fortunate for the two noble lords (North and Germaine) that there were no strangers present, or their enthusiasm and indignation would have excited the people to tear them to pieces on their way home from the House. Sir George Savile said to many of his friends—"he who did not hear that speech, has not witnessed the greatest triumph of eloquence within memory." The minority was the largest yet obtained—137 to 223.

After all, it may be doubted whether this display of oratorical power and on his part no doubt real humanity was not a party question. Congress would have engaged these allies if England had not anticipated the design; and Lord Chatham though venting a torrent of indignation on the same side of the question in the House of Lords, could not disprove that the same allies were employed under his own administration twenty years before.

Eleven days afterwards another tacit tribute to the wisdom of Mr. Burke's advice for an amicable adjustment of the differences with the Colonies, appeared in a conciliatory plan of Lord North, taken chiefly from that proposed by the former three years before. It was supported also by the same arguments, to the great indignation of many of his lordship's high Tory supporters in the House. Mr. Fox tauntingly congratulated the noble lord on at length becoming a proselyte to the doctrines of his honourable friend. The time however had gone by in which they could have effect.—The Minister, though a man of talent, pleasantry, and personal integrity, wanted enlargement of mind for the difficult circumstances around him. He was too often a long march in the rear of events; his remedial measures came when they were forced, not voluntarily proffered. Easy in temper and indisposed to labour, he was like many other easy-tempered men—deficient in energy for great occasions;—he could foresee or provide for little till it pressed upon him with overwhelming necessity.

America now would accept nothing short of independence. The junction of France promised to enable her to attain this object, for which the Minister seemed quite unprepared though often dinned in his ears by the member for Bristol. Under this impression it became a question with Opposition whether to admit the claim of that country at once, and by so doing secure commercial preferences to the mother country—an alliance offensive and defensive—and other advantages accruing from the kindly feelings produced by this concession and our remaining influence and old connexion; or by persisting to contend for what appeared no longer attainable, not only lose those benefits ourselves, but throw them into the scale of France, our watchful enemy.

To the former as an unavoidable result, Mr. Burke, after much deliberation, inclined—"Not," he said, "as a matter of choice but of hard and overpowering necessity. In the latter light only could it be regarded. On the day that he first heard of the American states having claimed independency, it made him sick at heart; it struck him to the soul, because he saw it was a claim essentially injurious to Great Britain, and one which she could never get rid of, never! never! never! It was not to be thought therefore that he wished for the independency of America. Far from it. He felt it as a circumstance exceedingly detrimental to the fame, and exceedingly detrimental to the interests of his country. But when by a wrong management of the cards, a gamester had lost much, it was right for him to make the most of the game as it then stood and to take care that he did not lose more."

Lord Chatham as strenuously opposed any admission of the kind; declaring that the independence of America once acknowledged the sun of England was set for ever, and in urging this sentiment in the House of Lords, was seized with that illness which terminated in his death. Deficient in some respects, and open to censure in many others, he was nevertheless the greatest war minister this country ever possessed. But he was no prophet. Time, which has belied his prediction as to the dependence of England on America, has shewn the superior judgment of the leader of the Rockingham party. The latter, on the death of this great man being announced, rose superior to petty resentments and immediately urged in his place the necessity for the nation showing its sense of his services by a provision for his

family, in addition to all the posthumous honours it could bestow. He was also one of the pall-bearers at the funeral.

A proposition by Lord Nugent to revise a series of oppressive restrictions which existed on the trade of Ireland naturally claimed the serious consideration and support of Mr. Burke. His great effort was in a speech on the 6th of May, exhibiting a more comprehensive and practical view of the commercial condition, intercourse, interests, and capabilities of the kingdoms, contrasting their comparative advantages and defects, than had ever been given there before. The grievance being undeniable, the motion was carried; when suddenly a number of hostile petitions pouring in from the trading and manufacturing towns, diverted the minister from his purpose; and thus though a narrow and selfish system of policy had already driven America into revolt, yet with the fact before the eyes of every man in the kingdom, the very same policy again risked a contention with, if not the loss of Ireland.

Bristol, taking a conspicuous part in the endeavour to repress the trade of the sister island, called upon her representative to support her views. The dilemma occasioned by this demand could not be otherwise than vexatious. His native country claimed justice; while his constituents claimed his voice and vote. But regarding principle and right above every consideration of prudence, he manfully avowed, that to comply with this desire, would be to sin against his conscience, against the first principles of justice, against the general prosperity of the empire, and however his constituents might think, against the truest interests of trade itself. "If, from this conduct," said he, "I shall forfeit their suffrages at an ensuing election, it will stand on record an example to future representatives of the Commons of England, that one man at least had dared to resist the desires of his constituents when his judgment assured him they were wrong."

To state his reasons more fully for declining compliance with this call, he wrote in April and May, 1778, "Two Letters to Gentlemen of Bristol on the Bills relative to the Trade of Ireland." These expound, in a few touches, some of the chief principles of commerce; such as the advantage of free intercourse between all parts of the same kingdom; the necessity of reciprocity of benefits; the evils attending restriction and monopoly; the advantage to ourselves of all our customers, and more particularly our fellow-subjects as

the Irish were, being rich rather than poor; and that the gain of others is not necessarily our loss, but on the contrary an advantage by causing a greater demand for such wares as we have for sale.

Political economists now consider these truths the mere alphabet of their science. Merchants, until lately, if they did not deny them in theory, could rarely be brought to approve the greater part in practice. Exclusions and restrictions, the depression of one body of individuals or district of country to exalt or enrich another, belonged too much to their then more confined opinions. His arguments, which were then in a great degree new, produced little effect in the quarter he wished. The people of Bristol could not be convinced there was equity or policy in giving a free trade with the British colonies and dependencies to Ireland. His determination to persevere in a wise and just course continued unchanged, adding, "While I remain under this unalterable and powerful conviction, you will not wonder at the *decided* part I take. It is my custom so to do when I see my way clearly before me; and when I know that I am not misled by any passion, or any personal interest, which in this case I am very sure that I am not."

Another offence in the eyes of his constituents was his vigorous support of Sir George Savile's bill for the Relief of the Roman Catholics, then suffering by the severity of the penal laws in force against that body. It was in fact believed by his friends to be wholly his own or by his recommendation, though brought forward under another name in order to avoid popular odium; which it might escape as the measure of an independent and influential country gentleman. Its justice was immediately recognized by the almost unanimous votes of both Houses of Parliament.

Among his correspondents this year were Boswell in a complimentary vein; Charles Fox; Wedderburne, the Solicitor-General, asking for information on the subject of "Tests," saying that he would rather trust to his (Burke's) knowledge than to any researches of his own. Nearly all his supporters at Bristol being opposed to the opening of the trade of Ireland, much of his time was employed in the spring in combating their opinions privately. To this end many long letters were written; nor would he bend in the least to their solicitations or arguments. From Ireland he had among others, several letters from the Speaker

of the Irish House of Commons, and Under-Secretary, on measures for the relief of the Roman Catholics; and a present from a body of members of that creed of three hundred guineas, to be followed by two hundred more, in proof of their sense of his exertions. This gift he promptly declined. A letter to the Speaker on the former topic appears in his works. At this period Dublin was enthusiastic in his praise. A design, warmly seconded by the public, was even announced to him by the same gentleman, of erecting his statue in that city. This contemplated honour proved but a spurt of gratitude soon forgotten, and never since revived. So that this great man, the most illustrious, in many respects, which that city or the nation ever produced, who had he been born in Scot and, would be almost deified by the people, has not in Ireland procured a single stone to his memory. The only tributes of respect known to the writer are a picture in the examination theatre of Trinity College, and a bust in its library. An unfeigned humility made him shrink from the idea of a statue. His observations on it above a year afterwards, in a letter to a member of the Irish legislature on her domestic affairs when his popularity there had declined, are marked by his accustomed force and truth :—

“I too have had my holiday of popularity in Ireland. I have even heard of an intention to erect a statue. I believe my intimate friends know how little that idea was encouraged by me; and I was sincerely glad that it never took effect. Such honours belong exclusively to the tomb—the natural and only period of human inconstancy, with regard either to desert or to opinion; for they are the very same hands which erect, that very frequently (and sometimes with reason enough) pluck down the statue. Had such an unmerited and unlooked for compliment been paid to me two years ago, the fragments of the piece might at this hour have the advantage of seeing actual service, while they were moving according to the law of projectiles, to the windows of the Attorney-General, or of my old friend Monk Mason.”

In a sharp debate on the ordnance estimates soon after this time, no reply being given to his questions respecting their unusual amount and the Speaker proceeding to put the question, he declared he would not suffer it to pass until some explanation was given. After a pause, it appeared

that not one of the board knew any thing practically of the subject. Touching on the point of order which had been alluded to at the moment, he considered it he said contemptible, when instead of forwarding, it stood in opposition to the substance of their duty; and long afterward boasted that during all the years he had sat in Parliament, he had never called any member to order.

The indecisive action of Admiral Keppel with the French fleet during the summer of 1778, and the dissension to which it gave rise with Sir Hugh Palliser his second in command, became a theme for general contention. In fact almost every person ranged himself on the side of one or other of the parties. For the Admiral, who had been taken from the ranks of Opposition to command the fleet, Mr. Burke had a most warm regard, having first met him at the house of Sir Joshua Reynolds to whom the Admiral had been an early patron. Political connexion improved the acquaintance into close and lasting friendship, of which the apostrophe to his memory in a "letter to a noble lord," is a proof; and at the same time perhaps one of the most eloquent tributes to a dead friend in our language. The Admiral felt reciprocal admiration, and had, as well as his old commander Sir Charles Saunders and others of the party declared of the orator "that if the country were to be saved, it could be only by the virtue and abilities of that wonderful man." When the former was about to undergo the ordeal of a court-martial, this attached friend accompanied him to Portsmouth, received from him there his picture by Reynolds, as a species of legacy in case the court-martial in their sentence should decide against his honour and character, remained with him during much of the trial, and is reported to have assisted in arranging his defence. To this there is some allusion in the letter to a noble Lord as "*his faithful companion and counsellor in his rudest trials.*"

His own interests were about this time or soon after, attacked by Lord Verney in a suit in Chancery, calling upon him, in conjunction with his brother Richard and William Burke as partners with his Lordship, to bear part of the loss sustained by unsuccessful speculations in the funds. This participation he denied by affidavit; nor was the circumstance probable in itself, or some better evidence of it would have been adduced than that nobleman could bring forward on

the occasion. They had not in fact been friends for some time ; and though his brother Richard, and William Burke participated in the transaction, it was scarcely fair to call upon Edmund to pay their debts of honour, as in such things there could be no legal claim. Some degree of misrepresentation having prevailed upon this point, it may be necessary to state, that as a holder of India stock, he might have profited by this property as any other man would do in its variations in the market, though even this is doubtful ; but there seems no valid foundation for the report of his gambling in the funds, which was not merely at variance with his habits but his principles. Neither would he have ventured to risk a high and good name in such transactions.

Another charge urged against him, as if it were not a misfortune rather than fault, was that of being in debt. Let it be remembered, that the rental of his estate was not estimated at more than £600 per annum if so much, which with his Irish property, occasional supplies, and the produce of his literary labours, formed nearly the whole of his income after the cessation of the agency for New York. Moving in the sphere of life in which he did, this must be confessed to be a poor pittance. Yet out of this, it may be stated, as he more than once mentioned the fact himself, he contributed to the support of several poorer relations, which of course could only be effected by very rigid economy. To one relative near Castle-town Roche he allowed £30 per annum out of the property in that vicinity ever since he came into possession in 1765. We have just seen that he had refused a present of five hundred guineas from the Roman Catholics which might have been accepted without the slightest imputation of any kind.

He had, in fact, no extravagant propensities to indulge. His domestic arrangements were wholly under the prudent management of his lady. His coach-horses took their turn in the plough. His table, to which men of merit or distinction in every class were always welcome, partook of neatness and moderation, not parade or profusion. At Beaconsfield, he preserved a frank and cheerful hospitality which those who enjoyed once were glad of the opportunity of joining again ; and while in town, he frequently asked political and literary friends to dine or sup as it happened on beef-steaks, or a leg of mutton, and commonly gave no more than his invitation professed. Of this an instance is related which as an after

dinner story tells rather amusingly, but the reader is only called upon for such credence as he thinks proper. Having been detained late in the House, he asked Fox, Lord John Cavendish, and two or three more of the party to sup, when on announcing the object of their visit to Mrs. Burke, a look of annoyance and despair sufficiently told the ill-provided state of the larder. A pause ensued; "surely" said the host with a comic face "there is beef enough!" Fox and two or three others making an apology for momentary absence hurried off to a neighbouring tavern, provided themselves each with a dish of such fare as could be procured, and amid much laughter from all parties, particularly the master of the house who cracked some jokes on their skill as waiters, passed an amusing evening.

Another accusation urged against him at this time was, that he displayed much more ability than candour in harassing Ministry with the most unmeasured condemnation. The same may be said of all Oppositions; and looking to the magnitude of the contest, the incapacity shown in its conduct, and the unfortunate results, it will be difficult to say that his censures were unfair, ill-timed, or unjust. Mr. Fox was upon all occasions more violent and much more personal, to a degree beyond even the usual parliamentary license. He constantly wore in the House what was considered the American uniform, buff and blue, which Burke excepting when solicited so to do which was not unfrequently the case, declined to make his common dress. The most moderate men in fact, lost their equanimity on this topic; and Messrs. Wilkes, Sawbridge, and others of the same stamp, were sometimes said to be almost scurrilous; for on no preceding occasion had debates run so high. Even the House of Lords often forgot its characteristic decorum, in the violence of the language used towards the Ministry.

This spirit found ample vent in the session, 1778-79, in a series of motions by Mr. Fox, on the state of the Navy; of Greenwich Hospital; an address to the King to remove Lord Sandwich, which were supported by Burke. He also took part on the question of the threatening manifesto of the Commissioners sent to negotiate with America: on the state of Ireland; on Mr. Dunning's motion respecting the powers of the Admiralty to grant or refuse Courts Martial; on an Inquiry into the conduct of the American War; on the

Budget; on a Bill for exemptions from being pressed into the Navy; and on another for limited service in the Army—a measure which he recommended by the strongest arguments, and though then rejected, it has since been as wisely as liberally adopted to the benefit of the service.

Early in 1779, among many of the first characters of the time, he followed his old acquaintance Garrick to the grave. Looking stedfastly towards the place of interment he remarked to one of the gentlemen present that “the spot was well chosen, for the statue of Shakspeare seemed to point to the grave where the great actor of his works was laid.” A present from the admired and accomplished Mr. (afterwards Sir William) Jones, of his translation of the Greek orator Isæus, the master of Demosthenes, whose orations as explanatory of the laws of property in Athens are necessarily interesting to a lawyer though perhaps for the same reason hitherto neglected by grammarians and philologists, drew from Mr. Burke one of his just and discriminating letters.

Ireland, notwithstanding his renewed endeavours in her favour, being still denied her due share in the commerce of the empire, came to a variety of resolutions against importing British manufacture. With still more effect in the way of threat, she formed her memorable volunteer associations, “nothing resembling which,” said Lord Sheffield, writing a few years afterwards, “has ever been observed in any country at least where there was an established government.” Even Scotland was not quiet. The concessions to the Roman Catholics in the preceding year instigated a mob not only to raze their chapels to the ground, but to destroy their private houses and property. A petition from this body, praying for compensation for their losses and security against further injury, was presented by Mr. Burke, who found an opportunity, on this occasion for exercising his wit, though as a Scripture phrase perhaps not in the best taste, to the great amusement of the House. Observing Lord North to be asleep, a frequent failing of that nobleman in public, at the moment he was attributing the popular excesses to the supineness of those in power, he instantly turned the incident to advantage—“Behold,” said he, pointing to the slumbering Minister, “what I have again and again told you, that Government if not defunct, at least nods; brother Lazarus is not dead, only sleepeth.”

Several letters from Scotland exculpating the clergy and certain societies from inciting the mob to violence against Romanists, were addressed to him in reply to some remarks made in the House, which he answered. To Bristol likewise he sent several private communications, in the hope of enlightening and liberalizing his friends there towards Ireland; also to Lord Rockingham and others. But in May, writing to Shackleton, a fit of depression or vexation, on a state of public affairs which all remonstrance or argument failed to remedy or influence overtook him with more than usual effect on his mind, and he expresses his readiness to retire altogether from public life.

CHAPTER VII.

Economical Reform—Letter on Parliamentary Reform.—Conduct during the Riots—Intercedes for mercy towards the Rioters.—Elocution Walker—Slave Trade—Rejection at Bristol—The Prince of Wales, Mr. Burke, and the Curate—Anecdote of Mr. Burke's humanity and playful humour—Note to Sir W. Jones—Opposed to Mr. Fox on the repeal of the Marriage Act—Mr. Sheridan—Shearing the Wolf—Change of Ministry—Letter to Dr. Franklin.

DURING the summer of 1779, the dangers of the country had alarmingly increased. No progress was made in subduing America. The expense of the war exceeded all precedent. The enemy's fleet sweeping triumphantly through the Channel, threatened Plymouth and other parts of the coast. And Ireland in a state of moral, seemed rapidly proceeding to actual revolt, by riots in Dublin, by the extension of the system and the imposing attitude of the volunteers, by the strong measure of a money-bill for six months only, and by very general resolutions against "the unjust, illiberal, and impolitic selfishness of England."

The speech from the throne, 25th November, recommending her hitherto rejected claims to consideration, drew from the Member for Bristol many bitter taunts for the want of the means, not of the will by Ministry, to coerce her by fire and sword as they had attempted with America. These reproaches though stigmatized as inflammatory were perhaps not undeserved; and the sense of the House was so far

with him, that having sat down once or twice from being unable to render himself heard in the more distant parts of it in consequence of a violent cold and hoarseness, he was pressed by loud and repeated calls from both sides to proceed. Dire necessity alone had extracted this measure of conciliation from the Minister. A vote of censure upon him for neglect and delay, moved by Lord Ossory, Dec. 6th, gave birth to highly-applauded speeches by Mr. Fox and Mr. Burke; the latter remarking, that that which had at first been requested as a favour, was delayed till angrily demanded as a right; till threats extorted what had been denied to entreaties; till England had lost the moment of granting with dignity, and Ireland of receiving with gratitude.

When however Lord North introduced his plan of relief such as it was, he gave it his approval, though without that warmth which the zealous spirits of Ireland expected and they themselves displayed on the occasion, but which he conceived its tardy and reluctant justice scarcely deserved. Hence arose a misrepresentation there, that he was altogether indifferent to the relief now granted. His popularity therefore sunk at once, both in the land of his birth and in that of his adoption: in Bristol, for conceding any commercial advantage whatever; in Dublin, for withholding any point however indifferent or unimportant in itself; a lot to which all statesmen who act without favour or partiality towards contending interests, are too often exposed. To remove this impression in Ireland, he wrote "A Letter to Thomas Burgh, Esq." dated January 1, 1780, explanatory of his views and motives, which, though meant to be private, soon found its way into the periodical prints of the time, and in some degree set him right with the more intelligent part of his countrymen.

The ill success of the war and the increased taxation required to support it, occasioning at this moment loud outcries for Parliamentary Reform, and retrenchment of the public expenditure, Mr. Burke dexterously wrested attention from the former which he had always deemed unsafe and impracticable, to the latter which he thought in every way practicable and expedient.

Of all men in the House he was perhaps the best qualified for this arduous undertaking by a share of political courage which shrunk from no duty however invidious; and by habits

of business which at all times laborious, were on this occasion exerted beyond all precedent. "For my own part," said he, "I have very little to recommend me for this, or for any task, but a kind of earnest and anxious perseverance of mind, which with all its good and all its evil effects is moulded into my constitution." Cautious of experiment as he professed to be even to timidity, this feeling formed a pledge that no crude or showy innovations should be attempted merely because they were new; and his idea of a very cheap government not being necessarily the very best, rendered it certain that nothing really useful should be taken away. He knew too much of human nature and of the business of the State, to be led astray by visionary schemes of hopeless purity and impossible perfection. The habits of the country he knew were any thing but niggardly towards public offices and public servants. While duty therefore required that nothing gross should be permitted to remain, a personal as well as a public liberality ensured that no injustice should be inflicted upon individuals; that economy should not become penury, or reform utter extirpation.

His notice of motion, on the 15th December, opened a brief but lucid exposition of the outlines of his plan, to which Opposition gave praise for the matter and manner. No one else ventured to say a word on a tender subject which touched the highest quarters in the State. A slight incident on this occasion again showed his dexterity in debate. While enforcing the necessity of frugality, and recommending to the Minister the old and valuable Roman apothegm *magnum vectigal est parsimonia*, he made a false quantity, rendering the second word *vēctīgal*. Lord North, in a low tone corrected the error, when the orator with his usual presence of mind, turned the mistake to advantage. "The Noble Lord," said he, "hints that I have erred in the quantity of a principal word in my quotation; I rejoice at it; because it gives me an opportunity of repeating the inestimable adage,"—and with increased energy he thundered forth—" *magnum vect ī-gal est parsimonia*."

Great as was the idea entertained of his talents, expectation was surpassed by the production of the plan itself introduced by the memorable speech of the 11th of February, 1780, which every one conversant with political history has

read, and he who has read will not readily forget. No public measure of the century received such general encomium. Few speeches from the Opposition side of the House ever told with greater effect. Had he never made any other it would place him in the first rank of orators and practical statesmen, for comprehensiveness of design, minute knowledge of detail, the mingled moderation and justice towards the public and to the persons affected, the wisdom of its general principles, and their application to local interests. As a composition it has been considered the most brilliant combination of powers that ever was devoted to such a topic. When printed it passed through a great number of editions.

The whole of the scheme was comprised in five Bills. These embraced the sale of forest lands; the abolition of the inferior royal jurisdictions of Wales, Cornwall, Chester, and Lancaster; of Treasurer, Comptroller, Cofferer, Master, and a variety of inferior officers in the Household; of Treasurer of the Chamber; of the Wardrobe, Jewel, and Robes Offices; of the Boards of Trade, Green Cloth, and of Works; of the office of third Secretary of State; of the Keepers of the Stag, Buck, and Fox Hounds; much of the civil branches of the Ordnance and Mint; of the patent offices of the Exchequer; the regulation of the army, navy, and pension pay offices, and some others; and above all a new arrangement of the Civil List, by which debt should be avoided in future, and priority of payment ensured to the least powerful claimants, the First Lord of the Treasury being the last on the list.

The bare idea of reforming so many offices would have overpowered any man of ordinary courage or exertion. But to reduce or to regulate so many sources of influence, to place the remedy side by side with the grievance, to encounter the odium of annihilating or diminishing the emoluments of the possessors enjoyed perhaps for years without notice or inquiry, was considered the boldest attempt ever made by any member out of office, and supposed to affect too many interests even for the authority of those who were in. To these were added the complication and difficulty presented in every stage of its progress: but he deemed it one of the greatest and most praiseworthy features of his life.

"It must remain," said Mr. Dunning in a burst of admi-

ration, "as a monument to be handed down to posterity of his uncommon zeal, unrivalled industry, astonishing abilities, and invincible perseverance. He had undertaken a task big with labour and difficulty; a task that embraced a variety of the most important objects, extensive and complicated; yet such were the eminent and unequalled abilities, so extraordinary the talents and ingenuity, and such the fortunate frame of the honourable gentleman's mind, his vast capacity and happy conception, that in his hands, what must have proved a vast heap of ponderous matter, composed of heterogeneous ingredients, discordant in their nature and opposite in principle, was so skilfully arranged as to become quite simple as to each respective part, dependent on each other; and the whole at the same time so judiciously combined, as to present nothing to almost any mind tolerably intelligent, to divide, puzzle, or distract it."

"Mr. Burke's Reform bill," says the historian Gibbon, "was framed with skill, introduced with eloquence, and supported by numbers. Never can I forget the delight with which that diffusive and ingenious orator was heard by all sides of the House, and even by those (Gibbon himself, as a member of the Board of Trade, was one of them) whose existence he proscribed. The Lords of Trade blushed at their insignificance. Mr. Eden's appeal to the two thousand three hundred volumes of our reports proved only a fertile theme for ridicule. I take this opportunity of certifying the correctness of Mr. Burke's printed speeches which I have heard and read."

"Only one sentiment," remarks another contemporary who voted against the measure, "pervaded the House and the nation, on the unexampled combination of eloquence, labour, and perseverance which had been displayed by their enlightened author. They covered with astonishment and admiration even those who, from principle or from party, appeared most strenuous in opposing the progress of the bill itself through every stage."

Similar testimonies might be adduced even from some of the Ministry, who were nevertheless ingenious enough to oppose in detail what they applauded in the gross. A considerable part of March, April, and May, were occupied in debating the different clauses. That for abolishing the office of the third Secretary of State was lost on the 8th of

the former month by a majority of seven, after one of the hardest fought contests ever remembered. Five days afterwards by the irresistible effect of the wit of the mover as much as his eloquence, sentence of death was passed on the poor Board of Trade by a majority of eight; the two thousand three hundred folio volumes of its labours, rather unluckily urged by Mr. Eden in its defence, being ridiculed with such inimitable effect by Mr. Burke, as to be in the opinion of many, the chief cause of condemnation. Execution of the sentence however was contrived by the Ministry to be delayed for the present; and a week afterwards, the sentiments of the House upon the bill altogether seemed unexpectedly changed by other clauses of importance being rejected by great majorities.

This measure drew from him during the session eleven or twelve speeches, combining so much labour, ingenuity, and wit, that it became a question in which of these points he excelled. In the debate on the Board of Works (April 21st), "Mr. Burke," said a contemporary, "distinguished himself more than ever by the force of his arguments, the fertility of his invention, and the pleasantry with which he enlivened a matter apparently dry and insipid in itself." Another writer on the subject says, "It was generally agreed both by members and strangers, that Mr. Burke had been seldom more agreeable in the House of Commons than on this evening. He evidently came down with his mind made up to the fate (rejection) of the remaining clauses of his bill; and therefore treated them with all that ready wit, pleasantry, and good humour which are the real features of his character."

A proposal by Lord North to give the India Company previous to the dissolution of their charter the required three years notice, produced from the Member for Bristol a speech against it of great fervour and animation. He supported a bill for suspending the elective franchise of revenue officers; and also a motion by Mr. Dunning for securing the independence of Parliament. He found time likewise (April 4th) to write a letter on the affairs of Ireland enforcing his former opinions, to John Merlott, Esq. of Bristol. Eight days afterwards (April 12th), he addressed another to the chairman of the Buckinghamshire meeting for obtaining Parliamentary Reform; a scheme

which he considered ineffectual to its intended purpose, and pregnant with danger to the Constitution. He could not make up his mind he said to so important an innovation. All his reading, observation, experience, and conversation with others possessed of wisdom and talent were against its being advantageous to good government. "Please God," he added, "I will walk with caution whenever I am not able clearly to see my way before me."

On the 8th of May, he spoke still more decidedly against the question, on Alderman Sawbridge's annual motion for the same object. A periodical work of the time styled this "a most able, ingenious, and elaborate speech;" and the outline of it found among his papers even more than verifies this description.

About this time, a few petitions to repeal the indulgences granted to Romanists two years before, excited to action the Protestant associations under Lord George Gordon, a wild fanatic of no talents, whose language in the House was often reprehensible, though commonly disregarded. He had moved, without finding a seconder, that the petition presented by Mr. Burke the preceding session from the Roman Catholic sufferers by the riots in Scotland, "be thrown over the table." To give further proof of his zeal in the same cause, he now called together, "for the honour of God," the rabble of London. The consequence of this proceeding were the riots; when the powers of the members of government, seemingly sunk in hopeless apathy, waited to be roused by the spirit and good sense of the king, who by taking the responsibility upon himself of ordering the military to act, restored the metropolis to the dominion of order and law.

In the exigency of the moment when Mr. Fox with inconsiderate party feelings refused to strengthen the hands of government, Mr. Burke to his honour, strongly recommended it; advising him and Opposition generally, to forget all their differences in unanimity and defensive associations. As a powerful advocate of the persecuted sect, the fanatical feeling ran strongly against him among some of the leaders. His residence in Charles Street, St. James's Square, was more than once heard to be threatened; he was reviled as a Jesuit in disguise, nick-named Neddy St. Omers, and caricatured as a monk stirring the fires of Smithfield, in addition to much more of similar vituperation. Trusting

however, to a considerable share of popularity, or believing that the bulk of the mob being bent on plunder and riot cared little for anything else, he did not hesitate to mix with a party of them, and experienced no great personal ill-will. His own notice of the adventure, written soon after to Mr. Shackleton, is as follows:—

“My wife being safely lodged, I spent part of the next day in the street amidst this wild assembly, into whose hands I delivered myself, informing them who I was. Some of them were malignant and fanatical, but I think the far greater part of those whom I saw were rather dissolute and unruly than very ill-disposed. I even found friends and well-wishers among the blue-cockades.” Some of the newspapers of the day give an anecdote which exhibits his personal fearlessness on the occasion, particularly as several friends had advised him to leave town for safety, which they deemed seriously at stake.

“This day (June 6th) a detachment of foot-guards took possession of Westminster Hall, the doors of which they at last closed to prevent the mob entering there: several Members of both Houses, who walked down on foot were thus prevented from getting into the House for a considerable time, among whom was Mr. Burke, who was presently surrounded by some of the most decent of the petitioners, who expostulated with him on his conduct, in abetting Sir George Savile’s motion for the Roman Catholic bill. Mr. Burke in his defence, said he certainly had seconded the motion for the bill, and thought himself justified in so doing; he said he understood he was a marked man, on whom the petitioners meant to wreak their vengeance; and, therefore, he walked out singly amongst them, conscious of having done nothing that deserved their censure in the slightest degree, having always been an advocate for the people, and meaning to continue so. Mr. Burke at length got rid of his troublesome interrogators.”

He had received positive information the previous day that his house was to be destroyed after that of Sir George Savile. Mrs. Burke, his papers, and a few valuables were therefore immediately removed to the house of General Burgoyne; shortly afterward a party of soldiers arrived for his protection, sent by the authorities without application, when his furniture being removed, the guard was with something

of a chivalrous disregard of self dismissed, from an impression that it might be made more useful elsewhere. The nights were spent with other volunteer friends of rank, in guarding Lord Rockingham's and Sir George Savile's houses. After forcing his way into the House of Commons on the following day, he gave vent, as usual fearlessly to indignation and remonstrance. "I spoke my sentiments in such a way," he writes to Shackleton, "that I do not think I have ever on any occasion seemed to affect the House more forcibly."

Few things do more credit to his active and sensitive humanity than zealous though unostentatious endeavours for the extension of the royal mercy to the chief part of the unhappy rioters who, having been convicted of various offences, now awaited the awful retribution of the law. With this view he drew up some reflections on the approaching executions, and exerted his influence in pressing letters to the Lord Chancellor, Lord Mansfield the President of the Council, and the Secretary to the Treasury, to submit his opinions to his Majesty and Lord North. Public justice, he urged ought to be satisfied with the smallest possible number of victims. Numerous executions, far from increasing, diminished the solemnity of the sacrifice; anticipating in this respect the general feeling of the present day, that if not absolutely bad, such scenes frequently repeated are certainly not useful. The letters and reflections appear in his works.

For the original instigators of the tumults among the higher classes he had no such consideration, uttering against them in Parliament several bitter anathemas. "They," he said, "and not the ignorant and misled multitude, ought to be hanged;" and when some of the leading "Associators" were seen in the lobby of the House, he exclaimed loudly in their hearing—"I am astonished that those men can have the audacity still to nose Parliament;" and had previously remarked that freedom of debate in the Commons of England had arrived at a new era. when a bludgeoned mob in the street aimed to destroy that freedom, while soldiers with fixed bayonets were employed at the doors to protect it.

On the 20th of June after calm had been restored, petitions were again presented against tolerating Popery, to which neither Ministers nor Opposition would give countenance. Mr. Fox and Mr. Burke spoke for three hours

each against reviving such an intolerant spirit. The latter, after expressing the warmest attachment to the Church of England, avowed that he abominated anything like intolerance, moving five resolutions to that effect and in reprobation of the late excesses, which were with little opposition carried. He also thwarted popular prejudice on another point. A bill had passed the Commons to prevent Roman Catholics from being permitted to give scholastic instruction to Protestants, when finding it likely to be productive of some injustice, he drew up a petition to the other House, which had so much effect with Lord Thurlow, that on the third reading he quitted the woolsack and by one of his forcible assaults upon the principle of the measure, drove it out of the House without a division.

One of the persons who solicited Mr. Burke's exertions on this occasion was Mr. or as he was commonly termed Elocution Walker, author of the Pronouncing Dictionary, and other works of merit, and who had given lessons in the art to young Burke. This gentleman had been educated a Presbyterian, but being in the habit of discussing religious subjects in places where such topics can be never properly discussed, namely, in debating societies, a singular result is said to have followed. Two or three persons were persuaded by his arguments to become Presbyterians, while he himself was argued into the propriety of becoming a Roman Catholic! The law in question aiming a deadly blow at his means of livelihood, he appealed forcibly to Mr. Burke one day in the vicinity of the House of Commons, who conceiving he was serving the interests of literature, introduced him to a nobleman accidentally passing, with the following characteristic exordium:—"Here, my Lord Berkeley, is Mr. Walker, whom not to know by name at least, would argue want of knowledge of the harmonies, cadences, and proprieties of our language. Against this gentleman and others, we are going, my Lord, upon a poor, ungrounded prejudice of the refuse of the mob of London, to commit an act of gross injustice; and for what? For crimes moral or political? No, my Lord, but because we differ in the meaning affixed to a single word," pronouncing it emphatically, "*transubstantiation*."

Having to present a petition to the House of Commons on the same subject some time before, in which was dis-

covered incorrectness of language or expression at the moment of coming forward, he set about correcting it though conscious of its uselessness, remarking, "If we are not favourably received, at least let us be worthy of it." While engaged in this way at the door writing very fast, and as he was often accustomed to do, conversing at the same moment with persons around him interested in the prayer of the petition, the Speaker, Sir Fletcher Norton, called for him somewhat impatiently to proceed. "It is hard, Mr. Speaker," said he, with an arch expression of countenance, but without raising his eyes from the paper or ceasing to write, "it is hard you cannot wait even a moment—'No, not to stay the grinding of the axe,'" a quotation from Hamlet, in allusion to the speed with which the prince was to be put to death in England, and appropriately applied to the expected fate of the petition.

His humanity exerted on another occasion, gave a fillip to the ingenious malice of the daily press. A man had been sentenced to the pillory at St. Margaret's Hill, Southwark, for attempts at an atrocious offence, when the multitude stoned him so as to occasion immediate death. For noticing this in the House of Commons, with remarks on its cruelty as being so much more severe a sentence than the law awarded, a newspaper chose to indulge in some silly but most slanderous reflections, for which a rule for a criminal information was obtained against the editor, though on apology, not pressed. Five years afterwards, on repeating in his place the same remarks on a nearly similar occurrence in Bristol, the slander was reiterated, when finding it necessary to bring an action against the printer, the jury awarded him, there being no attempt at defence, £150 damages. It is remarkable that shortly after this his friend Lord Loughborough, himself a judge, had to appeal to a jury against the same unprincipled and abominable insinuations, which had no other foundation than the same party or personal hostility as in the case of Mr. Burke; and he received the same sum from the jury.

In this year also, a more important scheme of humanity occupied the active mind of the member for Bristol; no less than the partial abolition, or material alleviation, of the slave-trade; and a variety of thoughts on the subject, with a sketch of a new negro code, were committed to paper. There were

many reasons, however, against bringing forward such a measure then. Among these were the incessant contests which American affairs occasioned in Parliament; the odium which such an innovation on the rights of trade and property would bring on Opposition from the West India interest; the policy of confining their strength to the more pressing grievance of the war; the impossibility of the Opposition by itself succeeding in such a design under any circumstances whatever; the temper of the nation, which was not at all ripe for the discussion; and perhaps the unpopularity he had already incurred at Bristol, and which such a proposal would increase to exasperation. Time has shewn that he judged rightly. Mr. Wilberforce who took it up six years afterwards, found it necessary to devote a whole life to the subject.

Mr. Burke's plan, likewise, embraced minute regulation of the trade in all its stages, at a moment when very little hope could be entertained of its total abolition. Had it been adopted, all the grosser horrors of the traffic would have been obviated; but it was gratifying to every lover of benevolence to find that many of his suggestions for the treatment of slaves in the island were, at length, after a long interval, adopted. Many of the subsequent regulations laid before Parliament, will be found nearly a transcript from the fourth section or head of his Negro code, as may be seen in his works, vol. ix. p. 301—another instance of what has been remarked more than once, that his wisdom was almost always a long way in advance of that of the age in which he lived. To the exertions of Mr. Wilberforce he always gave the most zealous support, and his labours were often eulogized in verse and prose by the admirers of that gentleman.

The dissolution of Parliament in autumn, carried him to Bristol, to ascertain whether the rejection he had apprehended on account of disagreeing with his constituents on certain points of policy, was likely to take effect. To a meeting held at the Guildhall on the 6th of September, he delivered his celebrated speech, the best ever uttered on such an occasion, and perhaps never excelled by anything he spoke elsewhere.* Were it always in the power of elo-

* In this opinion I am happy to find Sir Samuel Romilly agree. "I am not surprised that you so much admire Burke's speech (on American

quence to conciliate, or argument to persuade, there were in this enough of both to redeem not only the crime of differing in opinion with his constituents, but more serious offences, had such been committed. Declining all apology for opposing the wishes, though he was satisfied he said, not the interests of those he represented, he entered on his defence. The charges against him were four;—in not visiting the City more frequently—in supporting Lord Beauchamp's Insolvent Debtor's Bills—the Irish Trade Acts—and the relief granted to the Roman Catholics. Each of these he defended with extraordinary ability; rendering even the common and temporary affair of an election, a medium for promulgating great and permanent political truths—such as the hustings never before supplied us with, and never since.

"Gentlemen," said he, in summing up, "I do not here stand before you accused of venality, or of neglect of duty. It is not said that in the long period of my service, I have, in a single instance, sacrificed the slightest of your interests to my ambition or to my fortune. It is not alleged that to gratify any anger, or revenge of my own, or of my party, I have had a share in wronging or oppressing any description of men, or any man in any description. No! the charges against me are all of one kind—that I have pushed the principles of general justice and benevolence too far; further than a cautious policy would warrant; and further than the opinions of many would go along with me.—In every accident that may happen through life, in pain, in sorrow, in depression, and distress—I will call to mind this accusation, and be comforted."

The main body of the Dissenters, of the Corporation, and much of the weight of property and respectability in the city were decidedly in his favour, and strong resolutions were passed to that effect. The million were of another opinion; and against numbers on such an occasion it was useless to contend. "Were I fond of a contest," said he, "I have the means of a sharp one in my hands. But I have never been remarkable for a bold, active, and sanguine

Taxation); but though it is somewhat cruel to tell you so, it is far inferior to some of his later compositions, particularly to a speech made in Bristol at the last election in justification of his own conduct, which is perhaps the finest piece of oratory in our language."—*Life of Romilly*, vol. i p. 213.

pursuit of advantages that are personal to myself." The resolution to decline being immediately taken and as readily declared in another speech, brief but expressive, he thanked the electors for the favours they had already conferred, and honestly confessed his regret that they were not to be continued. Adding, that in sorrow not in anger, he took his leave, in person as he deemed most proper, rather than by letter as was most customary ; for as in the face of day he had accepted their trust, so in the face of day he accepted their dismission, conscious that he had nothing to be ashamed of. The appeal was very powerful, and the scene almost affecting, increased by the feelings of many of the auditory on the sudden death of one of the candidates. "Showing us," said Burke at the moment no less beautifully than pathetically, "what shadows we are, and what shadows we pursue!" Bowing to the sheriffs, to the other candidates present, and to the assembled multitude, he quitted the hustings ; and Bristol thus suffered itself to become a subject of reproach for ever.

If popular elections were always the exercise of sound discretion, the rejection of so great a man would be strange. But being as they are too often the result of tumultuous feeling and prejudice, the wonder ceases. Of all distinctions it has long been observed, that that which is raised on popular admiration is the most slippery and the most treacherous, continually falling away from under the wisest and soundest statesman, without serious demerit on his part. Such a position may be termed the tight rope of politics, "a tremulous and dancing balance," as Burke phrases it, on which none but the most dexterous political posture-master can hope to maintain himself long. Experience has proved that none can depend upon his footing there a moment : for that line of conduct which the more enlightened know to be right, and he himself feels to be conscientious, is as often as not that for which he may be cried up by the multitude to-day, and pulled down to-morrow.

So was it with this distinguished statesman. He had merely exerted towards Ireland the same liberality of principle he had shewn to America, and precisely on the same ground. While the one constituted his greatest merit in the eyes of Bristol, the other from illiberal motives in the people of that place, became his most serious offence. The injury to his own interests on account of thus legislating in favour of the general interests of the kingdom on the one

hand, and of oppressed individuals (small debtors and Roman Catholics) on the other, was considerable. The representation of Bristol from its wealth, commerce, and population, was certainly an important object to Mr. Burke. Mr. Burke was in every respect a high honour to Bristol. A great man and a great city are made for each other, and none but the most obvious and weighty reasons should be permitted to separate them.

It was about this time, perhaps, that hurt by the reception he had so undeservedly experienced, he is said to have given vent to momentary irritation against the mercantile character:—"Do not talk to me of a merchant;—a merchant is the same in every part of the world—his gold his god, his invoice his country, his ledger his bible, his desk his altar, the Exchange his Church, and he has faith in none but his banker." This conversational sally if ever made, was by no means his serious opinion. Commerce had been from the first as we have seen, his favourite study as a statesman; and in one of his early tracts there is a remarkable passage which the experience of our own day has amply verified. "Agriculture will not attain any perfection until commercial principles be applied to it; or in other words, until country gentlemen are convinced that the expenditure of a small portion of capital upon land, is the true secret of securing a larger capital by ensuring increased returns." In adverting to the arguments of some of his own party three years afterwards on the India Bill, who urged that merchants were from their habits, incapable of governing a country such as India, he dissented from such an opinion; liberally adding—"I have known merchants with sentiments and the abilities of great statesmen; and I have seen persons in the rank of statesmen, with the conceptions and characters of pedlars."

His correspondence during the year with various Bristol friends in anticipation of the actual result, was active. To Mr. Harford, who in conjunction with Mr. Champion had first proposed him, he had in the Spring offered at once to resign the seat if desired, or to any one else of more interest in the town and of as sound opinions. All his letters on this, to him, almost vital point, exhibit the thorough spirit of disregard of self. Charles Fox writing to him after it was over and while busily engaged in his own contest for Westminster says, "Indeed, my dear Burke, it requires all your candour

and *reverse of selfishness* (for I know no word to express it) to be in patience with that rascally city." Even opponents were struck by his moderation and utter absence of resentment or irritation both before and after the event; and toward the end of October the Corporation voted its thanks for his distinguished services.

On more public business his chief communications were with Sir. W. W. Wynne, Lord Loughborough, Lord North, Viscount Courtenay; and with Lords Hillsborough and Stormont on Indian affairs, which began some time before to take strong hold upon his mind from what he deemed oppression towards the Native authorities. The question of Parliamentary reform likewise hampered him while without a seat, so as to make him doubt whether it was quite prudent to accept one. He could not coincide with either that of the Duke of Richmond or of Sir George Savile, both men of high principles, talents, and character and of his own party, but on this point he thought mistaken, "Shall I put myself into the graceful posture," he asks, "of opposing both?"

Malton, for which he was formerly chosen, again received, and for the remainder of his political life retained him as her representative. "The humble borough," remarks a judicious historian (Adolphus), "gained by such a member an honour which the greatest commercial city might reasonably envy."

It is thus that such places not wholly under the influence of a popular spirit, make up in practical utility what they want in theoretical perfection; and one portion of the kingdom even by presumed faults, is enabled to repair the prejudice or injustice of another. Without this resource he might not at least for a time, have re-entered Parliament. He might have been disgusted reasonably enough, with the popular cause. A sense of wounded pride might have carried him into retirement, to become merely a spectator of scenes in which nature and practice had so eminently fitted him to act. His services which in number and in value are perhaps unequalled in the roll of English statesmen, would have been lost to his country. Much also would have been lost, and that is no trivial loss, in national fame. Great men are a species of valuable public property, always the pride, often the chief stay and support of their country, the stars which enlighten and beautify her intellectual fir-

mament, and by the numbers and radiance of whom her glory is raised and extended in the esteem of other nations. How many illustrious names might have been lost to the roll of English history, had it not been for the anomaly of close boroughs!

When he arrived at Bristol previous to the election, one of his correspondents, Mr. Noble, whom he particularly esteemed, told an anecdote of the habitual disdain with which Mr. Burke treated what he called "loose libels," and that strain of vulgar abuse so long directed against him even when its contradiction promised to be useful to his interests. The rumours of his being a Roman Catholic, of being educated at St. Omer's, and others of the same stamp, had it seems reached Bristol, and being believed by many of the electors in the humbler sphere of life, Mr. Noble* begged his sanction to write to Mr. Shackleton to receive from him, as his preceptor, a formal contradiction of them. The reply to this was a negative. "To people who can believe such stories," said he, "it will be in vain to offer explanations." His friend repeated the recommendation more pressingly. "If I cannot *live down* these contemptible calumnies, my dear friend, I shall never deign to contradict them in any other manner," was again the answer.

Some few years after, on a question which arose on the impeachment of Mr. Hastings, a passage to the same effect is contained in a letter written by him to a Member of the House of Commons:—" *It would be a feeble sensibility on my part, which at this time of day would make me impatient of those libels, which by despising through so many years, I have at length obtained the honour of being joined in com-*

* The testimony of this gentleman, now no more, is too flattering to the writer of this work as far as regards his sources of information, and too expressive of his own veneration for the memory of his illustrious friend, to be suppressed here. It was written after perusing the first edition.

"I have read your 'Life of Burke' with very great satisfaction and thorough conviction of its correctness: for the trifling circumstances therein related, which occurred at my house so many years since, are accurate even to the very words; and the relation of them in your Memoir flatters me much, from the consideration, that in after ages my children's children will feel proud that their forefather was honoured with the friendship of that great and good man.—Believe me, dear sir, your most humble servant,

"JOHN NOBLE."

mission with this Committee, and become an humble instrument in the hands of public justice." "Loose libels," he again remarked on a subsequent occasion, "ought to be passed by in silence. By me they have been so always. I knew that as long as I remained in public, I should live down the calumnies of malice, and the judgments of ignorance. If I happened to be now and then in the wrong, as who is not? like all other men I must bear the consequence of my faults and my mistakes."

Another anecdote of him while at Bristol is related by the same gentleman, regarding what his friend Fox probably thought one of his deficiencies. Passing an evening at Mr. Noble's house, his hostess in jest asked him to take a hand at cards, when he pleaded ignorance. "Come then, Mr. Burke," said she, playfully, "and I will teach you," and he accepting the challenge in the same good humour, with a witty remark on the power of female temptation, they sat down to the children's game of *beggar my neighbour*. This turning out in his favour, he was so amused with the idea of conquering his instructress, as to rally her, with much effect, during the remainder of the evening.

An instance of his earnest desire to serve unfriended merit, gave rise to an unusual scene, in which the characteristic affability of the Prince of Wales was displayed in a marked manner. During Mr. Burke's stay at Mr. Noble's he became so much pleased by the conversation and manners of a friend of the latter then resident in the house, a clergyman of high character but possessed of only a small curacy, as to express an inclination, should it ever be in his power, to forward his interests. Some years afterward, the living which he served, being in the gift of his Royal Highness and becoming vacant, the clergyman applied to Mr. Noble to remind Mr. Burke of his promise. The latter replied, that being very little known to the illustrious personage in question, he could not expect much attention to be paid to his application; "but any rate," said he to Mr. Noble, "let your friend write himself, and I will present the letter." Mr. Burke accordingly had an audience at Carlton House, was received in a gracious manner, and having presented his petition, it was acceded to in the handsomest manner. In the fulness of his heart, the orator from the business of returning thanks, was betrayed into an

animated discourse on the claims upon, situation and duties of princes, till at length recollecting himself he abruptly ceased, with an apology for the liberty he had quite unintentionally taken. "No apology is necessary, my dear Mr. Burke," said his Royal Highness, graciously laying his hand upon his shoulder in the most condescending manner; "from your lessons we must all derive wisdom; and it is to be regretted that so few imitate your candour." "I cannot, however," said Mr. Burke, on repeating the circumstance to his friends, "forgive myself for the indecorum of which I think I was guilty; but the suavity of the gentleman made me forget my situation;—in addressing my Prince, I thought I was speaking to my son."

In the discussions at the India House he sometimes took part, and in those of November this year respecting the appointment of a new governor to Madras, bore testimony to the talents and character of his old acquaintance Lord Macartney, who proved ultimately the successful candidate. On the 24th of this month, his son Richard, who had entered himself of the Middle Temple, in November 1775, was called to the bar, and took chambers intending to practise, which he continued for some years. Here more than one acquaintance of the writer of these pages had occasion to call upon him some time afterwards. He was a young man of talents much above mediocrity, the pride and delight of his father, whom he occasionally assisted in researches connected with parliamentary duty, and is said to have written "The Yorkshire Question;" a reply to Major Cartwright's plan of reform; besides several letters and tracts in reference to the politics of the time.

In the session of 1780-81, Mr. Burke took a leading part on the message announcing the rupture with Holland; Mr. Fox's motion respecting Sir Hugh Palliser's appointment to Greenwich Hospital; a proposal by Lord North to make the India Company pay a large sum for the renewal of their privileges; on the Budget; on the causes of the War in the Carnatic; on a Commission for examining the Public Accounts; on the Ordnance Estimates; on Mr. Hartley's bill to restore peace with America; a motion by Mr. Fox for an inquiry into the conduct of the war; another by Mr. Minchin on the supposed neglect of 3000 British seamen in Spanish prisons. These were followed by one from himself, on the

treatment of the people of St. Eustatius by Sir George Rodney and General Vaughan, supported by all the opposition. On the latter subjects, the humanity of his disposition was complimented as being only equalled by the brilliancy of his genius.

In February, the Economical Reform bill, or at least that branch relating to the civil list, was again introduced in accordance with the solicitations of a variety of political associations, whose thanks and compliments formed some counterpoise to the ill-humour he had experienced at Bristol. Four able speeches were expended upon it in vain. Much of his illustration and of his reasoning on the point were new. His reply is said to have surpassed everything that could be conceived on a subject seemingly so exhausted; the encomiums on his labour, eloquence, and wit, even from the ministerial side, were unprecedented; and a common remark in the House was, "that he was the only man in the country whose powers were equal to the forming and accomplishing so systematic and able a plan." Lord North, who was not the last to applaud, delayed for some days to give it a negative, though adjured by the mover to do so at once if he meant it, without further anxiety to him or to the House, and be at least for one day in his life, "a decisive Minister." In support of the measure Mr. Pitt made his first speech in Parliament.

It was about this period that the kinder feelings of Mr. Burke were appealed to by a young and friendless literary adventurer, afterwards the Rev. George Crabbe, who buoyed up with the praise his verses had received in the country, and the hope of bettering his fortunes by them in London, had ventured on the journey thither with scarcely a friend or even acquaintance who could be useful to him, and with no more than three pounds in his pocket. This trifle being soon expended, the deepest distress awaited him. Of all hopes from literature he was speedily disabused. There was no imposing name to recommend his little volume, and an attempt to bring it out himself only involved him more deeply in difficulties. The printer it appeared had deceived him, and the press was at a stand from the want of that potent stimulus to action which puts so much of the world in motion. Hearing however or knowing something of an opulent Peer, then in London, who had a summer residence in his native county, he proposed to dedicate to him his

little volume, and the offer was accepted; but on requesting a very small sum of money to enable him to usher it into the world, received no answer to his application. His situation became now most painful. He was not merely in want, but in debt; he had applied to his friends in the country, but they could render him no assistance. His poverty had become obvious he said, to the persons with whom he resided, and no further indulgence could be expected from them. He had given a bill for part of the debt, which if not paid within the following week he was threatened with a prison; he had not a friend in the world to whom he could apply; despair he added, awaited him whichever way he turned.*

In this extremity of destitution, Providence directed him to venture on an application to Mr. Burke. He had not the slightest knowledge of that gentleman other than common fame bestowed; no introduction but his own letter stating these circumstances—no recommendation but his distress. But in the words he used in the letter, "*hearing that he was a good man, and presuming to think him a great one,*" he applied in this emergency, and as it proved, with a degree of success far beyond any possible expectation he could form. Mr. Burke, with scanty means himself and unbribed by a dedication, did that which the opulent Peer declined to do with it. But this was not all; for he gave the young poet his friendship, criticism, and advice, sent some part of his family round to their friends to collect subscriptions for the work, introduced him to some of the first men in the country, and very speedily by recommendations and influence became the means of pushing him on to fortune.

As a critic also, Mr. Burke was frequently called upon by authors for his opinion and correction, whenever they could procure an introduction to acquaintance; many indeed without this customary preliminary. Nearly about the same time another candidate for poetic fame, the Rev. Mr. Logan, a Scotch clergyman, sent him a pleasing volume of poems, which was answered by a complimentary note and an invitation to breakfast in Charles-street. An anecdote of his humanity, occurring not long afterward, was related by an

* This letter came under my eye in the second edition of this work, with many more papers and letters, through my late friend Mr. Haviland Burke, but Crabbe being then alive, his name was suppressed.

Irish gentleman of rank who professed to know the circumstances. He adduced it by way of contrast to the eccentric kindness of a well-known Irish philanthropist of our own day to one of the same class of unhappy persons.

Walking home late one evening from the House of Commons, Mr. Burke was accosted by one of those unfortunate women who linger out a miserable existence in the streets, with solicitations of a description which were not likely to have effect. Perceiving this, she changed her style of supplication and begged pecuniary assistance in a very pathetic and apparently sincere tone. In reply to his inquiries, she stated she had been lady's maid in a respectable family, but being seduced by her master's son, had at length been driven through gradations of misery to her present forlorn state; she confessed to be wretched beyond description, looking forward to death as her only relief. The conclusion of the tale brought Mr. Burke to his own door in Gerard-street. Turning round with much solemnity of manner he addressed her, "Young woman, you have told a pathetic story; whether true or not is best known to yourself; but tell me, have you a serious and settled wish to quit your present way of life should you have the opportunity of so doing?" "Indeed, Sir, I would do any thing to quit it."—"Then come in," was the reply; "Here, Mrs. Webster," said he to the housekeeper who lived in the family for above thirty years, "here is a new recruit for the kitchen; take care of her for the night, and let her have everything suitable to her condition till we can inform Mrs. Burke of the matter." She remained a short time under the eye of the family, was then provided with a place, and turned out afterwards a well-behaved woman.

His playfulness of manner was no less conspicuous than considerate humanity, as the following incident—from grave to gay—which occurred about this time will testify:—

Two strolling players and their wives who paid frequent visits to the neighbourhood of Penn and Beaconsfield, chiefly on account of the liberal patronage of Mr. Burke, had acquired some celebrity from performing, by means of rapid changes in dress and considerable powers of mimicry, *all* the characters in the pieces which they represented. On one of these occasions a fox-hunter was to be exhibited, to whom a pair of leathern small-clothes was deemed an indis-

pensable article of dress, but unfortunately there was no such article in their wardrobe. In this dilemma, Mr. Burke, who was then at General Haviland's at Penn, and whose invention and assistance commonly contrived to overcome their difficulties, was applied to. For a moment he was at fault, but soon recollected that the identical garment formed part of his host's military costume. How to procure it indeed was the difficulty; for to ask it they knew would have appeared in the eyes of the owner a species of profanation. The old general was however held fast in bed by the gout, the wardrobe stood close to the bed, and in this seemingly secure station was deposited the leathern indispensables. "Come, Dick," said Edmund to his brother Richard, who equally enjoyed a jest of this kind, "we must out-general the general; you must be the decoy, and I shall be the thief; attack the old soldier on his favorite military topic, lead him to the heights of Abraham where his prowess was displayed with Wolfe, fight the battle and slay the slain once more; and in the mean time if my fingers be nimble and my luck good, I shall be enabled to march off with the breeches." This jocular scheme was successfully accomplished, and subsequently afforded a frequent topic for merriment to the visitors at Penn.

On another occasion a strolling party at Beaconsfield had called at Butler's-court, to know what play their patron would be pleased to order. One was mentioned, when Mr. Burke inquiring of the manager whether from the strength of his company reasonable justice could be done to the characters, some difficulty was started about one of them, an official personage, called in the play the Recorder. Just at that moment Richard Burke, then Recorder of Bristol, opened the door of the room, but observing a stranger in seeming conference with his brother, made the attempt to withdraw, when Edmund instantly and happily observed—"Here," said he to the Thespian hero, "is a gentleman who will suit you exactly:—Come hither Dick, we want you; or in other words Mr. Manager, to speak with due theatrical correctness—'Enter Mr. Recorder.'"

To these amusements he frequently treated all his servants for the benefit of the players, when their success in finding auditors had been indifferent; and by way of enhancing the treat in their estimation, often sent them in his own

carriage. On one of these occasions, the house being literally emptied of all the establishment two noblemen unexpectedly arrived from London, for whom Mrs. Burke had not only to make tea, but to become cook and footman by boiling the water herself, and by carrying the tea equipage to the drawing-room,—offices in which her noble guests discovering the dilemma good-humouredly volunteered to assist; until at length one of the under gardeners appearing, relieved the hostess from her embarrassment.

In June an instance of disinterested kindness should be told to his honour. Two Gentoos of high caste, sent to England from Ragonauk Row in a diplomatic capacity without previous precautions for their proper reception, were found by him in London in circumstances of great personal discomfort from their peculiar religious obligations. He took them down to Beaconsfield, provided a temporary dwelling in his grounds as they wished, where their customs could best be carried out, carried them to London frequently to see the chief objects of curiosity, the House of Commons, and the King's Levee, and saw them safely on board on their return home in the autumn. His hospitable attentions were duly reported by Hummond Row and Mamear Parsi to their chief, who forwarded a letter of thanks for this high-minded and considerate conduct shewn to his agents.

A motion by Mr. Fox in June, of this year, to repeal the Marriage Act, excited particular notice, on account of bringing forward Mr. Burke as its chief opponent, the two friends supporting their respective views with extraordinary ability. Those of the former were considered too general and philosophical for a practical statesman who knew so much of the world. While the latter seemed to keep his eye more on facts, on the truth of his general principles, and their application to the condition of society in this country. It was rejected as anticipated, and without a division. Mr. Fox it is said took up the matter from a family feeling of resentment—the aversion shown by the Duke of Richmond's family to his mother's marriage with his father.

It is amusing sometimes to look back and trace the contradictory opinions entertained of statesmen,—the most vilified of all men—at different periods of their career militant, and the little credit given them for honest opinions and conducts, when unwilling to go all lengths with the

zealots of all parties. At this time the Tories considered Mr. Burke one of their most formidable adversaries, while some of the more violent Whigs thought him little better than a Tory, verifying the line of Pope—

“ While Tories call me Whig, and Whigs a Tory.”

The formerly occasionally hinted that he treated rank, wealth, and connexion, with too little ceremony. The other that he was too aristocratical in his notions for a bold and decided Whig. “ I admired, as every body did, the talents, but not the principles of Mr. Burke,” says Bishop Watson, writing of this particular period; and his reasons for questioning the latter are rather remarkable as coming from a bishop—“ His opposition to the clerical petition first excited my suspicion of his being a high Churchman in religion; and a Tory, perhaps an aristocratic Tory, in the state.”

So thought likewise one of the party who although of one of the highest families was rarely just to his views (Lord John Townshend); “ Burke was certainly no moderate man; and when his party did not interfere, generally leaned towards the most arbitrary side as had appeared in the late debates on the Church, in which he had declared for the Clergy.” This opinion as to an arbitrary feeling could not possibly be true—for his fame and position arose from having *opposed* the arbitrary spirit shewn towards America. Neither peer nor bishop understood him whom they criticised; whose marked feature through life when fairly examined was to preserve to every man those rights which law or custom had given him. Alluding to these accusations in the speech on the Marriage Act just mentioned, he gives the substance of those doctrines which having more fully illustrated ten years afterwards, he was then charged with having broached for the first time;—doctrines which teach no more than the strict preservation of all the rights of all the orders, high and low, in the state; and which, whether known to us as Whiggism or Toryism, contain the main principles of sound patriotism.

To a new and brilliant recruit to the banners of Opposition, with whom as member of the Literary Club an acquaintance had been for some time formed, he is said to have given some friendly though disregarded advice on his first efforts in Parliament, which were made in the course of this session.

This was the witty and ingenious Richard Brinsley Sheridan,

who, possessed of talents the most useful and even splendid, only wanted industry and moral conduct to become equal to some of the great names of the age. Even as it was, indolent and dissipated, neglecting study and averse to business, his uncommon natural powers always placed him in the first rank. A good poet, he would not cultivate poetry; the first comic dramatist of the age and one of the best in our language, he deserted the drama; a shrewd politician, he wanted that knowledge and solidity of thought and principle, which after all, form the surest passports of public men to public favour; a powerful orator, he wanted the industry which could alone render his powers effective and convincing in the assembly which he had to address. He was ready, shrewd, and remarkably cool in debate; but like some advocates at the bar whose example few prudent men would desire to imitate, he seemed often to pick up his case from the statements of the opposite side. Power, fortune, and distinction, all the inducements which usually work on the minds of men, threw out their lures in vain to detach him from irregularity and dissipation, to which alone he was a constant votary.

With all these deductions, his exertions in Parliament were frequent and vigorous; often very powerful. His wit and ingenuity never failed to amuse and interest if they did not persuade. With greater preparation for parliamentary discussion, few could have produced a stronger impression. His speech on the Begum charge of more than five hours' continuance and considered one of the finest orations ever delivered in Parliament, drew from Mr. Burke, Mr. Fox, and Mr. Pitt, compliments of a high and unusual order; and from the House generally, and the galleries—members, peers, strangers of all sorts by common consent—vehement shouts of applause and the unusual tribute of clapping of hands. With such powers, who but must regret their inadequate exercise and unhonoured close? For it is melancholy to remember that this admired man, the friend of the great, the pride of wits, the admiration of senates, the delight of theatres, the persevering champion of a great political party for so many years, should at length be permitted to terminate his career in humiliating distress;—another addition to the list too familiar to us, of great talents destitute of the safeguards of correct principle and ordinary prudence.

Inferior to Mr. Burke to whom at one time he professed

to look up as a guide, in some natural gifts, in moral strength of character, in extent of knowledge, in industry, in mental activity, and in what may be termed the very highest order of political genius, there were in their history several points of resemblance. Natives of the same country, they sprang from that rank in life which is compelled to work its own way to wealth or eminence. From the study of the law in England, both were weaned by the attractions of general literature; and from that also, by the more animating contention of political life. It was their fate to struggle the greater part of their career in the up-hill path of Opposition for the momentary enjoyment of power, no sooner obtained than as suddenly snatched from their grasp. Yet ill success did not shake their constancy; and disinterestedness was in an eminent degree a merit of both. For amid unparalleled shiftings of principle and of party, by men who had not the apology of stinted or embarrassed fortunes to plead, they continued faithful to their leaders; a fidelity not less honourable than remarkable, for it was imitated by few. In addition to these coincidences the similarity may be carried a point further. Though always foremost in the support of political associates, they rose superior to party feelings when the public safety seemed endangered—Mr. Burke on occasion of the riots in 1780; Mr. Sheridan during the mutiny at the Nore. The French Revolution misled the latter, as it did other able and ingenious though not profound or reflecting men; and on this account, in the language of the former, they became “separated in politics for ever.” But he had the weakness long before to be excessively jealous of Burke’s fame and weight in the party.

A resolution of Congress to recall General Burgoyne from his parole in England induced Mr. Burke at the solicitation of the latter, to address a letter to Dr. Franklin, American Ambassador at Paris in August 1781, requesting his influence to have the order rescinded. The philosopher was more than usually polite in reply. “Mr. Burke always stood high in my esteem; and his affectionate concern for his friend renders him still more amiable;” expressing for him in another sentence a degree of regard which perhaps no other English statesman of any party enjoyed, “great and invariable respect and affection.”

In support of the amendment to the address, moved by

Mr. Fox November 27th 1781, Mr. Burke uttered a bitter philippic against the principle as well as the conduct of the war. The figure of shearing the wolf, in allusion to the *right* of taxing America which the minister still insisted upon, made a strong impression on the House. After descanting on our repeated losses and defeats he went on to expose the folly of claiming rights which could not be enforced—"But he must say a few words on the subject of these *rights*, which had cost us so much, and which were likely to cost us our all. Good God! Mr. Speaker, are we yet to be told of the rights for which we went to war? Oh, excellent rights! Oh, valuable rights! Valuable you should be, for we have paid dear at parting with you. Oh, valuable rights! that have cost Britain thirteen provinces, four islands, a hundred thousand men, and more than seventy millions of money! Oh wonderful rights! that have lost to Great Britain her empire on the ocean, her boasted, grand, and substantial superiority which made the world bend before her! * * * * What were these rights? Can any man describe them? Can any man give them a body and soul, a tangible substance, answerable to all these mighty costs? We did all this because we had a right to do it; that was exactly the fact—'And all this we dared to do because we dared.' We had a right to tax America says the noble lord, and as we had a right we must do it. We must risk every thing, forfeit every thing, think of no consequences, take no consideration into view but our right; consult no ability, nor measure our right with our power, but must have our right. Oh miserable and infatuated ministers! miserable and undone country! not to know that right signifies nothing without might; that the claim without the power of enforcing it was nugatory and idle in the copyhold of rival states or of immense bodies of people. Oh, says a silly man full of his prerogative of dominion over a few beasts of the field, there is excellent wool on the back of a wolf and therefore he must be sheared. What! shear a wolf? Yes. But will he comply? Have you considered the trouble? How will you get this wool? Oh, I have considered nothing, and I will consider nothing but my right; a wolf is an animal that has wool; all animals that have wool are to be shorn, and therefore I will shear the wolf. This was just

the kind of reasoning urged by the minister, and this the counsel he had given."

The omission in Lord Cornwallis's capitulation of any article to secure the American loyalists serving in the British army from the vengeance of their countrymen, formed another topic of his indignant reproach. Next day he returned to the charge with undiminished spirit; followed shortly by two renewals of the motion respecting St. Eustatius; a general feeling existing that the people of that island had been unjustifiably treated, which the heavy damages afterwards awarded by juries against the commanders, naval and military, served to confirm. Shortly afterward he presented a petition to the House privately conveyed to him, written on the blank leaf of an octavo volume with black lead pencil, pen and ink being denied, from Mr. Laurens, American Envoy to Holland, who being captured on his passage had been committed to the Tower a year before. The seeming rigour of the case excited all his sensibility, and the cause of the prisoner was taken up with such warmth, that he was liberated on bail shortly afterward, and soon exchanged for General Burgoyne. On this occasion (Dec. 3rd), an unusual degree of courtesy was shown by the House. Not being in his place when the private business had concluded, and Mr. Fox saying he was sure his honourable friend had not departed from his intention, it was agreed to await his arrival rather than proceed to other business.

Several of the politicians of Ireland being in the habit of occasionally consulting him on the public measures adopted there, Lord Kenmare at this moment solicited his opinion on a bill then in progress for the alleged relief of the Roman Catholics, particularly in matters of education. To this he replied in a letter dated 21st of February 1782, published soon after without his consent in the Irish metropolis. This piece occupying thirty octavo pages which has all his accustomed force and perspicuity, was written amid a multiplicity of business, public and private, allowing him so little leisure that it was said to be dictated sometimes while eating a family dinner, sometimes while dressing, or even when engaged in familiar conversation.

In public he was occupied after the recess, in supporting some motions of Mr. Fox against Lord Sandwich and the Admiralty Board; on the employment of General Arnold as

"a rebel to rebels;" on the Ordnance estimates; in an able reply to the new American Secretary (Mr. Welbore Ellis); on General Conway's motion, February 22nd, for terminating the war with the colonies which reduced the ministerial majority to one; and on Lord John Cavendish's motion of censure on Ministers March 8th. In animadverting on the difficulty of proposing new taxes (March 6th) he observed with his accustomed felicity of satire, that on looking over the blessed fruits of Lord North's administration, he found the country loaded with ten new taxes—beer, wine, soap, leather, horses, coaches, post-chaises, post-horses, stamps, and servants; recollecting that he had omitted sugar in this enumeration, he remarked, that since St. Christopher's was lost, and Barbadoes and Jamaica must follow, the omission was of small importance, as we should soon have no sugar to tax. "What fresh burdens can the Noble Lord add to this taxed and taxing nation? We are taxed in riding and in walking, in staying at home and in going abroad, in being masters or in being servants, in drinking wine or in drinking beer; in short in every way possible." "But viewing the account," he continued, "in a mercantile form, he must confess that for a hundred millions of money, we had purchased a full equivalent of disaster. If we were debtor by less in that sum of money, we were also creditor by less in a hundred thousand men, thirteen continental provinces, besides St. Vincent's, Grenada, Dominica, Tobago, St. Christopher's, Senegal, Pensacola, and Minorca, worth at a moderate computation, four millions and a half annually."

When at length this long and arduous legislative warfare terminated (19th March, 1782), by the resignation of the Ministry amid triumphant shouts of the Opposition, he offered an example of moderation by checking the too clamorous joy of his friends. He reminded them how many difficulties they had to encounter; how necessary it was to guard against their own favourite desires, opinions, vanity, love of power, or emolument; how much the public expected from their ability; and how much they stood pledged to achieve; in which temperate tone he was seconded by General Conway, another moderate man. Recollecting the dictation which Mr. Fox had now assumed in the deliberations of the party, it is difficult to believe that this homily on humility was not chiefly meant for him, from a misgiving in the mind of his

coadjutor, verified by the result, that his rashness or impatience of superior lead or influence would ultimately ruin the party.

A letter from Dr. Franklin, on the subject of the exchange of Mr. Laurens for General Burgoyne, drew from Mr. Burke the following characteristic letter, (February 28th), the morning of the first decisive expression of opinion by the House of Commons against the continuance of the American war:—"Your most obliging letter demanded an early answer. It has not received the acknowledgment which was so justly due to it. But Providence has well supplied my deficiencies; and the delay of the answer has made it much more satisfactory than at the time of the receipt of your letter I dared to promise myself it could be. I congratulate you as the friend of America, I trust as not the enemy to England. I am sure as the friend of mankind, on the resolution of the House of Commons, carried by a majority of 19, at two o'clock in the morning, in a very full House. It was the declaration of 234; I think it was the opinion of the whole. I trust it will lead to a speedy peace between the two branches of the English nation, perhaps to a general peace; and that our happiness may be an introduction to that of the world at large. I most sincerely congratulate you on the event. I wish I could say that I have accomplished my commission. Difficulties remain. But, as Mr. Laurens is released from his confinement, and has recovered his health tolerably, he may wait I hope, without a great deal of inconvenience for the final adjustment of this troublesome business. He is an exceedingly agreeable and honourable man. I am much obliged to you for the honour of his acquaintance. He speaks of you as I do; and is perfectly sensible of your warm and friendly interposition in his favour."

It may be remarked, as another proof of kindness of disposition, that he had not as he said, until recently, personal acquaintance with General Burgoyne. On the second debate (December 17th) the General said—"Gratitude did not come up to the true magnitude of the feelings he experienced towards him (Mr. Burke), and he revered him the more because he knew the real source of his attachment to proceed principally from a generous concern for the unfortunate, and a disinterested feeling for the oppressed and persecuted.

He considered the friendship of the honourable gentleman as the greatest blessing, as well as the greatest honour, that had ever happened to him in life." About the same time, General Conway on another subject, gave utterance to a nearly similar expression of sentiment by saying, "that he had an esteem for the honourable gentleman (Mr. Burke) perhaps superior to any he felt for any other man whatever."

These testimonies to his sterling qualities of character are strong, yet fall short of others found in his correspondence from almost every quarter. His gratuitous labours in effecting the exchange of Laurens and Burgoyne, cost him nearly a dozen long letters, a motion in Parliament, and considerable exertion otherwise; yet neither were his personal friends, and one as we know was wholly unknown. From Crabbe, struggling on to the clerical profession by means of his influence and aid, two grateful letters were received; a long one from Sir Joshua Reynolds then travelling in Holland, on Dutch pictures; while Bristol, India transactions, Roman Catholics, and some more private affairs, gave unceasing employment to his pen to discuss, and his wisdom to advise.

CHAPTER VIII.

Appointed Paymaster General—Reasons for not being in the Cabinet—Letters to Lord Charlemont—Lord Shelburne—Coalition—Reports of the Select Committee on Bengal—Communication on the Arts to Barry—India Bill—Mr. Pitt—Mr. Burke elected Lord Rector of the University of Glasgow—Scotsmen—Character of his Epitaph on Sir G. Saville—Reception in the New Parliament—General Haviland and family—Jeu d'Esprit of Deau Marlay—Letter to Miss Shackleton—Anecdotes.

Thus had terminated the most severe, and on one side, ably fought political contest in our history, and with it virtually the war in which it originated. But the conclusion did not leave Mr. Burke, as it found him, virtually if not nominally, leader of the party.

Mr. Fox, his political pupil and friend, who had been for some time treading closely on his heels in Parliament, and who had now advanced to an equality in the conduct of business there, added to great popularity out of doors, finally took the lead. For this there were some obvious reasons.

Inferior to his tutor as a great and commanding orator, and what ought to be of more consequence to the country—as a sound and effective statesman, he frequently excelled him and others in vigour of debate. He possessed peculiar tact beyond all his contemporaries and all his predecessors without exception, chiefly from manners, for being at the head of a political party. He enjoyed all the weight which birth and connexion, and these were then essential objects among the Whigs of England, could give. His acquaintance with the great was necessarily extensive, and his friendships nearly as general; with the young by community of pursuits and pleasure; with the old and staid by community of talent. His fortune originally considerable had been squandered; his temper was easy; his thirst for popularity excessive as he admitted in a letter to Burke—"amidst all the acclamations which are at this moment dinning in my ears, and for which you know I have as much taste as any man;" his manners were adapted to gain it, and his sacrifices to ensure it. His very faults and weaknesses were with his acquaintance more matter of jest or of apology than of censure. Some of his doctrines were more to the taste of the people who placed confidence in his sincerity; and with scarcely a shilling he could call his own, they were pleased to think him in spirit independent.

In most of these points he had the advantage over his coadjutor who had suffered some loss of weight by his rejection at Bristol; by his disregard of the popular voice when he thought it ill-directed; by a more uncompromising temper; by being supposed a dependant of Lord Rockingham; and among a certain class by being a native of Ireland. There was unquestionably a jealousy through life of the merits and influence of Burke even among many who advocated the same cause, which nothing but very uncommon powers and extraordinary labours enabled him to surmount, and of which he frequently complained. Under all these disadvantages he had kept the effective lead in the Commons for ten years; and had Lord North quitted office three years sooner would have filled a higher political station; the common opinion early expressed at the table of Lord Rockingham being, "that he was the only man who could save the empire from dismemberment." Even just before that Minister's resignation, he himself remarks he had obtained a considerable share of public confidence notwithstanding the jealousy and obloquy which had

assailed him during much of his career. "I do not say I saved my country—I am sure I did my country much service. There were few indeed that did not at that time acknowledge it." That Mr. Fox should now prevail with Westminister at his back, with unbounded popularity in the nation, and with the advantage of that aristocratic feeling in his favour common in this country, forms no cause for surprise. Mr. Burke, who considered humility in the estimate of ourselves a species of moral duty, submitted to the sense or the necessities of his party without a murmur. A vain man would have resented this; a weak one complained of it; an ambitious or selfish one probably taken advantage of it on the first opportunity to quit the connexion for ever, and throw the weight of his name and talents into the opposite scale. No feeling of discontent is known to have escaped from him.

In the division of the spoil of office, his share was a seat in the Privy Council and the Paymaster-Generalship of the Forces; then the most lucrative office in the State and remarkable for having been held by Lords Chatham, Holland, North, and Charles Townshend, previous to their becoming first Ministers. Considerable surprise was expressed at his not being included in the Cabinet. One reason assigned for this was his desire to purge the office in question, not usually a Cabinet office, of its acknowledged impurities, though the real one perhaps was the necessities of his party which required Cabinet offices for men of greater family and Parliamentary interest though of far inferior talents; and also possibly for the gratification of Lord Shelburne and his friends who enjoyed a much larger share of the royal favour. It is also true that he drove no bargain on the subject for himself, expressing to his friends his willingness to serve his country not where ambition might dictate, but where the general interests of government required. His moderation will be still more esteemed when it is known that the chief arrangements for the new Administration were committed to his direction by the Marquis of Rockingham. To this he alluded three months afterwards on the discussions produced by the elevation of the Earl of Shelburne to the head of the Treasury.

After all, it may be doubted whether this moderation, forbearance, disinterestedness, or by whatever other name it may be designated, was not misplaced. Those who affect humility in political consequence will commonly be taken at

their word by their associates; and an attentive examiner will find that Mr. Burke made this mistake throughout his public life. The pride of the Whig aristocracy indeed had scarcely begun as it has been well said, to *thaw* during the most active part of his career; and he was therefore perhaps constrained to give way to the more potent influence of birth and family influence. But Whiggism was, and no doubt deserved to be, injured by such exclusive arrangements. On the present occasion, he ought beyond doubt, to have been in the Cabinet, and had he insisted upon it a seat could not well and would not have been refused. The omission certainly hurt his political reputation among many who could not know or appreciate the generosity of the sacrifice he made; and even at the present day it is urged as a reproach, that though infinitely superior in talents to any member of the Cabinet excepting Mr. Fox, he was forced to accept of an inferior office in administration. His exclusion from the Cabinet remains a permanent stigma on the Whig party.

Party however unlike literature, is seldom a Republic. It is Monarchy in miniature, where each must keep an appointed station for the benefit of all; and where other circumstances such as rank, property, or weight in the country, independent of talents, must combine to constitute a leader suitable to the views of the dispensers of office. But were a man in this country, of great capacity and attainments though of little influence or fortune, such for instance as Mr. Burke, deliberately to choose his side in politics as he would a profession—that is for the advantages it is likely to bring—he would probably not be a Whig. That numerous and powerful body is, or was, believed to be too tenacious of official consequence to part with it to talents alone—and too prone to consider great family connexion, rather than abilities of humbler birth, as of right entitled to the first offices of the state. They are, or were, willing to grant emolument but not power to any other than lawyers, who do not materially interfere with their views on the chief departments of government. This opinion notwithstanding the rather ostentatious profession of popular principles, is believed to have made them sometimes unpopular in the great market of public talent, and to have driven many useful allies into the ranks of the Tories.

His Majesty with no attempt at concealment received his

new servants unwillingly, nor is it great matter for surprise. It is hard for any man and most of all perhaps for a king, to receive into his confidence and councils those who for nearly twenty years together have thwarted his most favourite prejudices or notions. So strong was his aversion to the Rockinghams, that Lord Shelburne, leader of another branch of Opposition, was offered the Treasury in preference to the Marquis, but feeling the want of sufficient weight and connexion in Parliament, he prudently declined the honour. The King however made him the channel of communication with Lord Rockingham, who in consequence insisted before he accepted of office, upon certain stipulations, which were—to concede independence to America, to introduce a system of economy into all the departments of the State, and to carry some popular bills through Parliament.

The ministerial labours of the Paymaster-General were more considerable than those of any member of the Cabinet. His Reform Bill though much mutilated, passed both Houses, as he found what most reformers in time discover, that it is easier to propose public correctives when out of office than to carry them into effect when in. Many good reasons indeed were assigned for the alterations; and as the measure ultimately stood, no similar purgation of ministerial influence is known in our history, thirty-six offices eligible to be held by Members of Parliament being at once abolished. He also declared his readiness whenever the sense of the House would go with him, to adopt every part of the plan he had first proposed.

The bill to regulate his own office was deemed a species of feat in ingenuity, labour, and knowledge of business. The system had become so complicated and the abuses so ancient, that a universal feeling prevailed among preceding Paymasters down to the lowest clerks in the establishment, of the hopelessness of the one being simplified or the other amended. He nevertheless succeeded in his object chiefly by the assistance of Messrs. Powel and Bembridge, surrendering to the public the interest and other advantages accruing from the enormous sum of 1,000,000*l.* which was not unfrequently the amount of the Paymaster's balance in hand. His disinterestedness did not stop there. As treasurer of Chelsea Hospital he became entitled to the profits of clothing the pensioners, amounting to 700*l.* per annum, and by a new agreement with the contractor managed to

save 600*l.* more. These sums, which as regular perquisites of office might have been enjoyed without impropriety or reproach, he generously threw into the public treasury. It will scarcely be credited that by this reform of the office, 47,000*l.* per annum was saved to the public, of which sum 25,300*l.* were the usual and avowed perquisites of the Paymaster, which all his predecessors received. Considering his pecuniary circumstances these were no ordinary sacrifices to public principle; and they gained from the country at large and from Parliament just as much credit as such things voluntarily given usually do—little notice and no recompence.

He agreed in the propriety of opening the negociation with Holland; in a variety of censures passed by Mr. Dundas on the government of India; and in conceding independence to the Irish Parliament, expressing in a letter to Lord Charlemont (June 12th) some ingenious sentiments in his usual elegance of manner, more especially in epistolary writing. Hearing that a statue was to be erected to Mr. Grattan, he seized the opportunity of recommending as the artist, a young Irish sculptor named Hickey, thus endeavouring to do for another struggling son of genius what he had previously accomplished for a Poet and a Painter. Hickey however died young. He executed a bust of his patron, now in the British Museum, presented by Mr. Haviland Burke.

When the news arrived of Rodney's great naval victory in the West Indies, he declined to renew the inquiry against the commander-in-chief respecting St. Eustatius saying, that on public grounds he had brought it forward, and on public grounds if the House thought proper he would let it drop. After a beautiful apostrophe to the laurel crown of the Romans he concluded by adding—"If there were a bald spot on the head of Rodney, he would willingly cover it with laurels." By the persuasions of Mr. Fox, who had promised all his influence to the popular cause, and who afterwards took much credit to himself with the people of Westminster for the fact, Mr. Burke did not attend a discussion on Parliamentary Reform, which in accordance with his known opinions, he must have opposed. Thus a sacrifice was made to the popularity of his friend's name, which he never made to his own.—Administration on the whole, did much for popularity, and might have succeeded in the aim to acquire it, when the Marquis of Rockingham, who had been seized with the prevailing complaint of the time, influenza, unex-

pectedly died. Lord Shelburne, without intimation to Mr. Fox, Mr. Burke, or others of the party attached to the deceased nobleman, instantly vaulted from the Home Department into the vacancy as Prime Minister. Unable or unwilling to act with him, they immediately resigned.

This, which has been considered a hasty measure, certainly did not meet general approval. There is no foundation however for an assertion made by some, who profess to know some of the political secrets of the time but who in fact sought to excuse one friend at the expense of another, that it arose chiefly from the irritation of Mr. Burke. The suggestion on the contrary as we now know, came from Mr. Fox. His importance, from the situation which he held in administration was more directly affected by that event: while it is undoubtedly true that both while they disagreed with the new head of the Treasury on some public points, entertained a strong dislike to the private character of the man. He in return is said to have felt quite as cordial an aversion to them; and he was fortified by having had the ear and favour of the King.

The origin of this coolness and dislike, particularly between Burke and the new Premier which was not recent, it is difficult to trace; but arose probably from some peculiar perhaps unconstitutional sentiments to which his Lordship had occasionally given utterance in the House of Peers, and some of which Mr. Burke quoted afterwards in order to condemn. Also to alleged inconsistencies which had occurred when he was in office before—and perhaps to something which he might have heard from his friend Mr. Lauchlan Maclean when the latter was his Lordship's Under Secretary in 1768. That the feeling of that nobleman and his friends towards the late Paymaster was not less marked, became obvious on the 9th of July, when Mr. Fox having justified the line of conduct he had pursued, and being replied to by General Conway who with others of their friends had *not* resigned, Mr. Burke rose to support Mr. Fox and was met with violent confusion and noise at the bar. For a moment he felt some emotion, arising from delicacy as he said to one part of the House, and the most sovereign contempt towards the other; but those who by the present unaccountable tumult seemed dissatisfied with his conduct, knew where to find him.—Averting to the Marquis of Rockingham, he said he was a man of clear head and pure heart, and his successor was directly the reverse—

a man of all others the most unlike him.—Adding, after a variety of strong animadversions, (rather a strange species of apology)—“that he meant no offence, but would speak the honest conviction of his mind;—If Lord Shelburne was not a Catiline or a Borgia in morals it must not be ascribed to any thing but his understanding.”

At an earlier period there seems to have been between these parties some formal politeness but no cordiality, although no cause of aversion had then arisen. To his cousin Nagle Burke had written a few years before—“What you say of Lord Shelburne is more important. I very well remember your application to me some time ago; I remember too, that I mentioned it to Colonel Barré. Nothing further came of it; I believe that agency was not vacant when you wrote. Between ourselves, and I would not have it go farther, there are, I believe, few who can do less with Lord Shelburne than myself. *He had formerly, at several times, professed much friendship to me; but whenever I came to try the ground, let the matter have been never so trifling, I always found it to fail under me.* It is, indeed, long since he has made even professions. With many eminent qualities he has some singularities in his character. He is suspicious and whimsical; and perhaps if I stood better with him than I do, my recommendation would not have the greatest weight in the world.”

This nobleman, with considerable talents, extensive information, and perhaps a better acquaintance with the foreign relations of the country than Mr. Fox who filled that department, had unfortunately acquired a character for political bad faith. He had been designated a Jesuit and nicknamed *Malagrida* for some years. In several points report had been busy with certain peculiarities of character; he was accused of insincerity, of duplicity, and even of want of common veracity toward his colleagues; to which on the present occasion some slighter circumstances gave countenance, though it is but just to observe, the more serious charges against him were never proved. It is not a little remarkable that the unknown writer of Junius's Letters seems to have had a similar aversion to him, for in recommending portraits of the Ministry to the caricature pencil of Lord Townshend, (Sept. 16, 1767), he gives loose to licentious satire on Lord Shelburne, then Secretary of State for the Southern Department, in a bitterly sarcastic strain. By the friends of

his Lordship the revolt of the Rockinghams was ascribed to petulance; to the disappointed ambition of Mr. Fox; to the desire of Mr. Burke to place the Duke of Portland at the head of the Treasury; and to consequent discontent at finding the Earl's influence in the highest quarter so much greater than their own. Of this superior influence, there had been abundant proofs—in the offer of the Treasury, as already stated, in preference to the Marquis; in securing, almost unknown to that nobleman, the Order of the Garter for himself; a heavy pension for Colonel Barré; and a peerage, a pension, with the unusual honour of a seat in the Cabinet as Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster for Mr. Dunning, both his intimate friends and chief supporters in the House of Commons. While an enforced obligation compelled Burke, at least for the present, to let the cutting-edge of his Reform Bill glance harmless over the Duchy in question, now placed under the guardianship of this friend.

The pension to Colonel Barré having excited animadversion some time afterward in the Commons, his Lordship urged that it had been the proposal of Lord Rockingham himself, in lieu of the Pay-office which he wished to give to Mr. Burke; and that he had the letter in his pocket in which the offer was made. Burke and Lord John Townshend peremptorily denied any such arrangement in the strongest manner, called the story an utter fabrication, and dared him to produce the letter. The letter never was produced. Mr. Fox, Mr. Courtenay, Mr. Lee, reiterated the charge of breach of veracity on other points. These circumstances account, in some measure, for Burke's increased aversion to the new Minister; and that he thought his own motives pure there is no doubt, as he could not he said give a stronger instance of sincerity than with a small fortune and large family to sacrifice a lucrative office to public principle. And to the moment of the Usher of the Black Rod arriving to summon the House to hear the prorogation, he did not cease from strong animadversion.

In addition to labours on general Economical Reform and on his own office during this short official existence, were several letters and papers drawn up for Lord Rockingham; one a speech or memorial to the king on the true nature of that bill, and a few others. From Mr. (afterwards Sir William) Jones on a proposed bill for India; from Crabbe, now formally become the "reverend;" from Bishop Barnard and Mr. Eden in Ireland; letters of respect and of congratula-

tion on accession to office were received. To William Burke, then in Madras, he wrote a few particulars of his position in the most affectionate strain as—"My dear, my ever dear friend:" states his salary to be four thousand pounds, his son's as deputy, five hundred, with the Secretaryship of the Treasury open to his brother if he chose to quit the bar. Dr. King, afterwards Bishop of Rochester, had given the same gentleman by desire of Burke all the preliminary details of the party coming into power. A warm and affectionate letter "My dearest Burke," also came from the Duke of Portland, then Viceroy of Ireland, on the loss they had sustained in the Marquis, hinting at the difficulty of the position intended for him, that of First Lord of the Treasury; but adding—"you have a right to influence my wishes and to direct my opinion."

In June of this year Madame d'Arblay, then Miss Burney, first met Mr. Burke and his family at dinner at Sir Joshua Reynolds', on Richmond Hill. He asked to be introduced, sat opposite to her, complimented her writings, and became so amusing by the variety and brilliancy of his conversation as, in the words of the fair narrator herself to the writer some years ago,* "Completely to win my admiration. —A young authoress," she says, "could scarcely feel otherwise with attentions from one, who before he was introduced, and when I could but conjecture who he was, exhibited very evidently that he was no common man. He was ever afterwards most kind and friendly to me, as well as to my father, when kindness and countenance were valuable to a young writer." She goes on to describe him in her memoirs—"He is tall; his figure is noble; his air commanding, his address graceful. His voice is clear, penetrating, sonorous, and powerful; his language copious, various and eloquent; his manners attractive; his conversation delightful. * * * Neither is the charm of his discourse more in the matter than the manner; all therefore that is related from him loses half of its effect when not related by him."

* On my first interview with her, which was obtained with some difficulty through the medium of the friends of her son, my object being in reference to some reported anecdotes of Goldsmith, she said—"I have for some time ceased to see all strangers. I am not equal to it. I admit you now only in consideration of being the biographer of Burke. To the memory of that great man, to his admirers and friends, which should comprise nearly the nation, I could refuse no moderate request."

Soon afterward he wrote her an encomiastic letter with some well turned compliments on the merits and success of "Cecilia." In conversation however he was not all complimentary; several useful criticisms mingled with his approbation, showing that he had read the work attentively. They met not unfrequently in the evening societies of the day, where his attentions to her were marked; and towards the end of the following year on the dismissal of the Coalition Ministry, procured for her father the situation of organist to Chelsea Hospital, of which she says—"Nothing could be more delicate, more elegant than his manner of doing this kindness. I don't know whether he was most polite or most friendly in his whole behaviour to me. I could almost have cried when he said—'This is my last act in office.'"

On the re-assembling of Parliament, December 5th, 1782, he assailed the speech and its authors, on that and the following days, "in a vein of wit, argument, and satire, so finely blended, and so powerfully carried on," to use the words of the reported debates of the time, "that the House was kept in a burst of laughter the whole time." At other periods, particularly a few days afterward, varying his attack by invective or serious argument. On one of the former occasions, Mr. Pitt the new Chancellor of the Exchequer though personally complimented more than once, was nettled by the wit of the late Paymaster into some petulant and even angry remarks.

Lord Shelburne, who had in the recess signed the preliminaries of peace, discovering his deficiency in Parliamentary strength, deputed Mr. Pitt toward the end of autumn to wait personally on Mr. Fox in the last private interview but one—in 1790 on the question whether Impeachment abated by the dissolution of Parliament—which these eminent men ever had, in order to attempt a reconciliation. The latter however would not hear of his Lordship remaining at the head of the Treasury. On the contrary he preferred a junction with Lord North, who by the numbers still attached to him in the House, held the balance between Ministry and Opposition. This weight he was induced to throw into the latter scale, and thus formed that celebrated coalition which by the vote of the 21st of February condemning the peace, threw out the Ministry and succeeded to their places. The Paymaster-General resumed his

office. His brother Richard, from a practising barrister became again one of the secretaries to the Treasury, and on the death of Lord Ashburton, Recorder of Bristol. His son likewise returned to his former position.

Part of the odium of forming this amalgam of parties fell subsequently, as usual, upon Burke, though with little or no justice. He concurred in it as matter of necessity, but neither interfered with the arrangements, nor defended it with his accustomed vigour; and had in fact, strongly objected to it till overpowered by the persuasions of Mr. Fox, who was both eloquent and urgent with him on the occasion. In the debate of the 17th of February, 1783, on the preliminary articles of peace in reply to Mr. Powys who stigmatised the coalition, Mr. Burke said there was nothing heterogeneous in such an alliance if any such had been formed—which he had yet to learn; a sufficient intimation that he knew nothing of the first steps taken in that measure. It is likewise true that as Lord Shelburne had previously made overtures to Lord North for the same purpose, Opposition might consider it as only fighting the minister with his own weapons.

The real authors of the coalition were Lord John Townshend, as he himself says, Mr. George North, and Mr. Adam, who conducted the whole of the negotiation. "If Burke," he adds, "had been averse, we must have dropt all idea of the thing, as he had the greatest sway, I might almost say command, over Lord Rockingham's friends, with the exception of the Duke of Devonshire." * * "Burke however had no great hand beyond this (mere assent) in the work." All the friends of both parties seem to have been much more active; Mr. Eden is said to have been the first proposer; Lord Loughborough recommended it; Mr. Sheridan, though doubtful at first, ultimately approved it; Colonel Fitzpatrick also; Mr. Fox himself nobly said that his friendships were eternal, his enmities only momentary; and after forty years' experience and reflection, Lord Erskine found in it nothing to condemn. The true secret of the unpopularity of the coalition may have been the subsequent attempt to carry the India bill. Whatever share therefore belongs to Mr. Burke in the business of the coalition—and it certainly was small—he assented rather than acted under the unanimous feeling of the leading members of his own party, and of all the members of that which they

joined. He had in fact fewer reasons for avoiding it than Mr. Fox. Once or twice indeed he had threatened Lord North with impeachment. At other times he paid many compliments to his personal integrity and amenity of manners; while the Minister, as if to evince the propriety of the latter compliment, often rendered justice to the splendid powers of his adversary even in moments when most severely assailed by him; and in the earlier periods of his power kind offices had not unfrequently passed between them. The dislike of Mr. Burke was political, pointing solely at the Minister. That of Mr. Fox was not only political, but personal to the man. He had said that the Minister's blood ought to expiate his misdeeds—that he was the greatest criminal in the State—that he would be afraid to trust himself with him alone—and that if he ever acted with him he would be content to be thought for ever infamous; intemperate and inconsiderate assertions which his own generous nature was the first to condemn. For using them Lord North frankly forgave him; for recanting them the public never did.

One of the first acts of the Paymaster-General, and for which he incurred considerable censure, was to restore Messrs. Powell and Bembridge, cashier and accountant of the office, who had been dismissed by Colonel Barré for alleged mal-practices. His benevolent feelings or official wants in this instance mastered his prudence. The truth was he did not believe them personally implicated in guilt from the unreserved disclosures they had made to him of the affairs of the office. He conceived it also a design on the part of Lord Shelburne and his friends, to lessen the popularity of Mr. Fox by throwing imputations on the memory of his father, whose accounts while Paymaster formed the main subject of dispute. A still stronger reason was, that by their assistance and theirs alone he had accomplished the reform of his office, while the clerks wrote to him that without their assistance they could not go on with the reform of the business of the department.

In a debate (March 27th) on Williams's Divorce bill, he again differed from Mr. Fox on a question which like that of the Marriage Act, might be termed the politics of morals. A clause had been introduced by Lord Ashburton in the Upper House, bastardizing the issue of women convicted of

adultery, and born after separation from the husband. Mr. Fox opposed it strongly. Mr. Burke supported it, with what the reported accounts describe as "wonderful force;" giving his friend perhaps a hint on the score of morals by sarcastically observing, "that though no friend himself to divorcees for insufficient causes, he had remarked that most of the difficulties started upon them, came from bachelors; men, strangers to the nice feelings of husbands, and to the aggravating sensations which the injured honour of married men could alone feel." He opposed on the 7th of May, in an excellent speech, Mr. Pitt's motion for Parliamentary Reform. The latter took an opportunity of retaliating, on an accusation advanced against the Paymaster of altering and expunging clauses according to his own taste, in a bill connected with his office. The Speaker pointed out the misconception of the Member who made the charge, but Mr. Pitt clung to it with some pertinacity as a handle for censure;—so little do statesmen in Opposition differ, when the object is to assail the more fortunate possessor of power.

It was at this period that he drew up the Ninth Report of the Select Committee of the House of Commons for inquiring into the administration of justice in the provinces of Bengal, Bahar, and Orissa—a well digested, comprehensive, and instructive document, occupying above 260 pages, and dated 25th of June 1783. It embraces the state of the Company as it then stood; the commerce of India, internal and external; and the government exercised under the charter and under different acts of parliament, considered in relation to the same heads of internal and external departments. The conduct of Mr. Hastings on a variety of occasions, some of which were subsequently formed into charges against him, came under animadversion. The curious history is given of offering his resignation as Governor General in 1776 through his agent Mr. or Colonel, Maclean, whom he had expressly sent home for that among other purposes; and when he found this surrender unexpectedly accepted, utterly disclaiming such resignation—the authority of his agent for giving it—his own handwriting containing his instruction to that effect—and even the testimony of two of his personal friends Mr. Vansittart and Mr. John Stewart, witnesses of the directions given to Mr. Maclean. The Eleventh Report of the same Committee, drawn up in the same year and relat-

ing chiefly to Mr. Hastings's alleged corrupt receipts of presents, is also the production of Mr. Burke. It is a shorter though not less able paper than the former, filling above eighty octavo pages, but with a number of appendices of official documents. Both pieces might have been meant as precursors of the India Bill, in order to impress the public mind with the anomalous state of India and a conviction of the necessity for some change.

So diversified were his powers and so ready his means of throwing them forth upon all subjects, that in the midst of these important investigations and contentions, he found time as is pretty well ascertained, to address a judicious and interesting though unavowed paper to Barry, containing free yet friendly criticisms on his great pictures then exhibiting in the rooms of the Society of Arts. The ability shown by the writer interested the painter so much, that he eagerly returned an answer as directed to the bar of the Cocoa Tree in Pall-Mall, soliciting personal acquaintance or further correspondence with so competent a critic. No rejoinder was ever made, or the author positively known. But adding to his acknowledged love for the arts, the regard shown for the individual to whom it was addressed with the internal evidence of style and matter, the writer beyond doubt could be no other than the Member for Malton. His reasons for not avowing himself were probably a desire to avoid unprofitable personal argument with such an intractable spirit as the painter. He wished likewise to prevent any increase of that unreasonable jealousy felt by the latter at his intimacy with Sir Joshua Reynolds, from whom he might think the observations addressed to him, originated. Of this jealousy Barry, who was in temper the Rousseau of painters, could not divest himself, thinking his patron's friendship for the greatest artist of the age a degree of neglect shown to his own fame and merits. The paper is long, discriminating, and with some just observations on the philosophy of Art. By Barry himself it was always attributed to Burke.

The recess of Parliament was devoted to the concoction of the celebrated India Bill, of which Mr. Burke is said to have been a joint penman with the reputed author, though this has never been proved. It is supposed, though not at all likely, that he was the only one of the ministry who knew much of the matter while in progress; and no doubt it was

submitted to his revision. He might likewise have been the author of the second or supplementary bill, ascertaining the powers of the new government, and securing the rights and interests of the natives; but all the great and leading principles were undoubtedly those of Mr. Fox. A note (October 1783) from Mr. (afterwards Sir Arthur) Pigot who drew it, shews that portions of it were placed in Burke's hands—"I shall be particularly obliged to you to send me so much of the bill, or instructions for the bill, as you have in the state in which it is; as it will very much forward my work. Indeed I cannot begin till I get it."

A writer who may fairly claim some consideration for what he says,* endeavours to fix the origin of this measure upon Burke, but is unable to furnish any proof whatever of the fact. Neither is there the slightest trace to that effect in a more recent production† relating to the political life of its author; and were it true, it is scarcely possible that letters or memorandums from Burke bearing upon the subject, should not have been found among the papers of Mr. Fox. All that we learn from them is the conviction that the latter knew thoroughly the hazardous game he had in hand. To Lord Northington (Nov. 7) he writes—"Our India measure will come on soon after the meeting. It will be a vigorous and a hazardous one, and if we get that well over, I have very little apprehension about anything else here." Again he says to a friend whose name is not given—"They are endeavouring to make a great cry against us, and will I am afraid succeed in making us very unpopular in the city. However I know I am right and must bear the consequences, though I dislike unpopularity as much as any man. I know I never did act more upon principle than at this moment when they are abusing me so. If I had considered nothing but keeping my power, it was the safest way to leave things as they are, or to propose some trifling alteration, and I am not at all ignorant of the danger which I run by this bold measure; but whether I succeed or no I shall always be glad that I attempted it, because I have done no more than I was bound to do in risking my power and that of my friends when the happiness of so many millions is at stake." These are honest

* Thomas Moore—*Life of Sheridan*—pp. 287-8 4to. edition.

† Lord John Russell's interesting, though unluckily disjointed, *Memorials and Correspondence of Charles James Fox*, vol. ii.

and manly sentiments from whomsoever imbibed, but furnish no clue as to any other source either of them or of the bill than his own breast.

Many endeavours indeed have been made by the warm followers of Mr. Fox to throw off from his shoulders the burden of some of the serious political mistakes he committed; and Burke, as the moving spirit of the party is usually singled out as this Atlas of error. No reflecting man can be convinced of this. In the nature of things it is scarcely possible to be correct, excepting we suppose that Mr. Fox had not, or did not exert, an understanding and a *will* of his own—points which those who attended to his general conduct or the usual tenacity of his opinions will not for a moment believe.—That Burke assisted in the formation of the India bill; that he gave his opinion on parts of it; that he revised other parts; and that he consequently knew more of it while in its dormant state than most others of the ministry, are matters already admitted. But there is not a single fact on which to ground a belief of his being the original projector of the measure, or a probability of his proposing the more daring and arbitrary and consequently obnoxious parts of it.

Examining likewise his preceding or subsequent opinions, it will be readily admitted that the prominent and innovating features of the plan bore little resemblance to the usual cautious legislation of one, who always entertained strong distrust of great and sudden changes in government, and was therefore little likely to propose the entire subversion of one—a sentiment which he particularly advanced during the debates. Neither is it probable that he who was never accused of egotism on other questions, should become so laudatory on this which, if the allegation were true, must have been so much indebted to his own hand. In addition, it may be observed that in a debate in 1793 on the question of voluntary gifts to government and enrolments of volunteers, upon the propriety of which he differed in opinion with Mr. Fox, he said in reply to some allusion to similar events about the end of the American war, that the mind of that gentleman was so much taken up at the period in question with his India bill that he could attend to nothing else. Such an assertion in the House of Commons when they were no longer intimate, would scarcely have been hazarded had he himself been equally concerned. It must also be remembered that the high eulogium he passed on the character of

Fox in his great speech on the bill, was mostly in allusion to his being the *author* of it.

The motives however which dictated this important measure though misrepresented at the time ought no longer to be matter of doubt among intelligent men. It is the idlest of all things in a country like England to talk of a preconcerted scheme to overawe the King, to annihilate the prerogative, to render the voice of the people nugatory, or to fix any ministry whatever perpetually in place. Such assertions may serve the momentary purpose of rendering a body of political rivals unpopular, but are unworthy of the pen of history; and their best refutation is to be found in the circumstances that followed the attempt to carry this bill. The administration of the government of India in many points could not well be worse conducted than it had been. Its proceedings for more than twenty years together had called forth constant animadversion in Parliament and in the nation. Frequent inquiries and discussions there as well as in Courts of Justice, had elicited facts so little creditable to our sway as to become a source of reproach with foreigners upon our national fame and character for justice. Nothing could be more self-evident than the necessity for some reform, as the passing of Mr. Pitt's bill soon afterwards and the additions made to it from time to time, proved. The *mode* of reform now attempted was quite another matter. It bore the stamp of a great, an energetic, an inventive, but an arbitrary mind. It imparted to the legislature, not the Executive authority, a new power unknown to the constitution, that of appointing Commissioners who were to exercise the functions of government over that vast continent. It annihilated with little preface or apology the chartered rights of the India Company: took from it the management of its property by open force; offered no compromise; soothed no objections or prejudices; and attempted no conciliation. The principle itself and the mode of carrying that principle into effect, were equally objectionable. It was distinguished by another striking and unprecedented peculiarity—for it had the effect of uniting the King and the people for the first time in our history against a majority of the House of Commons.

Mr. Burke viewing the measure through a different medium urged its success with all his powers. He reserved himself chiefly for the second reading, 1st of December 1783,

when in a crowded House prepared to hear something uncommon, he delivered one of those surprising orations which in vigour, in ingenuity, and in that forcible yet expansive grasp with which he usually fastens on a subject, seemed to leave the energies of other men far behind. Disclaiming several questionable arguments urged by some ministerial members in its support, his reasoning turned principally on the necessity of the measure—the breach of the articles of its charter by the Company and consequently as in other such agreements the nullity of the compact—the enormous abuses of power by the Company's servants—the utter inability for a series of years to correct those abuses by remonstrance, or censure, or orders; by the voice of the nation, by the voice of Parliament, by the voice of the Directors of the Company themselves, by the voice of many of the highest servants of that Company on the spot where the abuses were committed. It was only from a conviction that the system was wholly incorrigible by less lenient means, that he, for one, would ever lend his hand to the subversion of that or any other established mode of government. The present bill he said would guard against future robberies and oppressions; and its highest honour and title would be that of "securing the rice in his pot to every man in India."

"The most ignorant individual in the House," says a contemporary member, "who had attended to the mass of information which fell from the lips of Burke on that occasion, must have departed rich in knowledge of Hindostan. It seemed impossible to crowd greater variety of matter applicable to the subject into smaller compass; and those who differed most widely from him in opinion, did not render the less justice to his gigantic range of ideas, his lucid exposition of events, and the harmonic flow of his periods." "The speech of Mr. Burke," in the words of another contemporary, "upon this grand turning point of the Administration was perhaps the most beautiful, sublime and finished composition that his studies and his labours had produced."

While his zeal and eloquence assisted to propel the bill through the Commons, he was seen along with Mr. Fox standing on the steps of the throne in the House of Lords during the discussion there, anxious and agitated, striving by the influence of personal character and talents to perform the same service in that assembly which he had accom-

plished in the lower House. Other and superior but adverse influence was also at work. The King more alarmed for his authority than perhaps the occasion required, exerting his natural weight among the Peers caused the bill to be thrown out; and he immediately flung the Ministry after it by a message to the Secretaries of State at one o'clock in the morning of the 19th of December to deliver up the seals of office. Thus this famous measure upon which so much labour and talent had been expended, became the lever by which to prize its authors out of office.

Offensive or imprudent as the design may have been, it is not perhaps generally known that this plan for seizing upon India as a direct possession of the Crown, was originally the suggestion of another and greater Minister, quite as bold, as ambitious, and as decided in character as Mr. Fox himself. This was no other than the great Lord Chat-ham. Mr. Burke said more than once, that to his personal knowledge his Lordship in 1766 and 1767 seriously contemplated the total dissolution of the territorial power of the East India Company as a *government* in India, and the assumption of it by the executive authority at home, leaving to the Company only an exclusive, or nearly an exclusive right, to the trade of that country. A similar design has been laid to the charge of the late Lord Melville in 1781; or at least that he *hinted* at the necessity of such a measure, from the inability of Government to control effectually the proceedings of the local authorities in India. The fact however is by no means brought home to the latter.

His correspondence during the year, having now great public labours on hand, proved less extensive than usual. Among the more striking letters was one from Mr. (afterwards Sir William) Jones, for whom he had much regard as an estimable kindred spirit, and who in return felt warmly the honour of his notice and esteem. The moment he heard of the accession of the coalition to office and a rumour that Lord Thurlow was to be permitted to remain, he wrote to Burke that in permitting the latter, were it true, a great mistake had been committed. "I know him well," he said, and proceeded to draw his characteristics and perverse conduct with an accuracy which was fulfilled to the letter even under the premiership of Pitt. If ever the measure had been resolved upon, for which the King was anxious, this and other intimations decided his removal.

The three months struggle which followed the dismissal of the Coalition, between Mr. Pitt, who accepted the Treasury, and the Opposition who constantly outvoted, censured, and threatened him with even weightier proofs of disapprobation, has little to do with the personal history of Mr. Burke, who exerted himself less on this than on any other great emergency of his political life. He probably felt the force of the difficulty so apparent at the very threshold of the discussion—that the King had an undoubted right to choose his own Minister, and against the Minister so chosen no specific offence could be alleged. The weight of the argument therefore was against the supporters of the party. It is also true that he always thought and always said that Mr. Pitt had worked himself into office unfairly, if not unconstitutionally. Mr. Fox fought this political battle with sufficient skill; and Mr. Pitt kept his ground with equal courage, and perseverance. He was backed indeed by the favour and exhortations of his Majesty, who had taken so strong an antipathy to the former gentleman that sooner than receive him as first Minister, he had expressed a determination to quit England for Hanover. Perseverance rendered this singular resolution unnecessary. The Opposition majority gradually dwindling from fifty-four to one, Parliament was dissolved in March 1784: and the new elections running everywhere in favour of Ministry, attended by every symptom of popular sympathy and satisfaction, no less than one hundred and sixty of their opponents were thrown out under the name of "*Fox's Martyrs*."

Mr. Pitt who won this victory of the King's will over some of the leading influences of the country, was one of those rare examples of men who by the union of uncommon talents with fortunate circumstances, seem cut out by nature to influence or to govern kingdoms. He was a lucky man however before he became a great one. Peculiar good fortune placed him in a station which at his period of life and slight hold upon the country, he had no reason to expect; and his talents enabled him to maintain the important position thus singularly acquired. It was an unprecedented occurrence in this or perhaps any other European country, to see so young a man placed at the head of public affairs; to snatch it from grey-headed experience and unquestioned fame; to retain it from youth to manhood, from manhood

to the borders of age, with no diminution of royal or popular favour, rendering the State in more than one sense a species of patrimonial inheritance.

In looking back to the first few and more inexperienced years of his administration, it is impossible not to admire the skill, the mingled prudence and moderation with which it was even then conducted. He had to provide a government for India, to revive trade, to arrange for the payment of the public debt, to regulate and increase the revenue, and to restore many other national interests nearly ruined by the American war. He had to face in Parliament a combination of by far the ablest men this country ever saw; sometimes in vehement contention, sometimes anticipating, sometimes bending to their suggestions; but commonly holding the tenor of his way so wisely, that they had few substantial opportunities of finding fault. To uphold him indeed he enjoyed in an unusual degree the patronage of the people and the King. Yet without such a firm hold upon either on the ground of established reputation or of previous services, as to be certain of its continuance without the exertion on his own part of great political dexterity. Taken as it were upon trial he had a character to acquire. His father's name proved a tower of strength upon which he securely reckoned, and doubtless it proved on his start in life the first and readiest passport to public esteem.

To the King and people it was obviously necessary by the nature of the ground on which he stood, to pay assiduous court; and he did this without any seeming art or effort, oscillating to one side or the other as circumstances required; in favour with both yet subservient to neither, though exposed occasionally to the accusation of insincerity. If to the popular side he gave his vote, to the other he was charged with lending his secret influence—a charge not substantiated. Yet were it true, the former might be an assertion of principle; the latter possibly an unavoidable sacrifice to expediency, which every Minister and almost every man must occasionally make in his connexion with office or with the world. Up to the period of the French Revolution he had an arduous part to play in Parliament, and he played it well. After that event, by the imprudence of Opposition in its admiration of the proceedings in that country, he gained an accession of strength which fixed him

more firmly in his seat than ever. His manners were somewhat distant; with neither the amenity of Fox nor the frankness of Burke. His moral character stood high; his prudence—the better part of talents perhaps as well as of courage—was felt; his personal disinterestedness experienced and acknowledged; his rectitude of intention universally believed. Altogether, the estimation in which he was held as a public and private man carried him through even the disasters of the French war with little decrease of popularity.

His eloquence was that of business—precise, logical, fluent, with a command and choice of the best words hitherto into the best places which the most gifted men rarely possess, and to which a tall figure and fine toned voice gave great effect. It was deficient however in variety, in splendour, in felicity of illustration, in what may be termed those flashes of genius which not only throw light on an intricate and difficult point, but sometimes succeed in cutting the knot of a sophism, which cannot be clearly unravelled. It dealt little in classical quotation or allusion though he was an excellent classic; it did not seem so much the emanation of a vast and comprehensive as of a bounded but well-regulated intellect, and which probably caused Burke once to call him “the sublime of mediocrity.” There is in it little of passion; few of those overwhelming bursts which surprise us frequently in Burke, and were sometimes heard from Fox. In all these respects he was inferior to both, particularly the former, as well as in wit and sarcasm (though his sarcasms were frequent and bitter), and in vigour and fertility of imagination. He adheres indeed in argument closer to the point than either, but on the whole warms and interests us less, possibly from the position he held compelling him to stand so much upon the defensive. At the same time there was in his speeches amid great power, a simplicity and seeming integrity of manner that won confidence to what he said; and besides being more brief than those of his great rivals, he possessed the still greater merit in the eyes of a cautious politician—that of never committing himself too decidedly; of not saying too much or too little on doubtful points. One of his merits as an admirer remarked was that of being able at any time to deliver “a King’s Speech off-hand.” Few men had more power over the House of Commons where his speeches told with great effect. But

although of a quite different character from those of his father, they are likely to share the same fate as literary compositions—and also those of Fox—that is, never to be consulted a second time for any extraordinary originality of thought, exhibitions of genius, or the highest attributes of eloquence.

In November 1783 Mr. Burke was elected Lord Rector of the University of Glasgow. His installation which took place in April following, drew a large concourse of spectators including all distinguished for rank or eminence in the surrounding country, anxious to see one of whom they had heard so much. Several literati, among whom was Professor Dugald Stewart, accompanied him from Edinburgh. An elegant speech expressed his thanks for the honour conferred, his regard for the learning and talent assembled within their walls, and his esteem for the national character by which he had been favourably impressed. "They are a people," he said to Mr. Windham, "acute and proud, of much pretension and no inconsiderable performance; and notwithstanding undue egotism and excessive nationality on the whole very estimable." Professor Lecchman was the official medium of communication with him on such affairs of the College as were to be executed in London, one of the first being to see the Trustees of the celebrated Hunterian Museum, which had been a bequest to that University.

In the new Parliament, which met in May 1784 the chief effort of the late Paymaster was in moving (June 14th) a representation to the King on the late dissolution; a "paper," said Mr. Fox subsequently, "which would make the fame of some men, but which in the number and excellence of Mr. Burke's productions was, perhaps, scarcely remembered." Two days afterwards on Alderman Sawbridge's motion for a committee to inquire into the state of the representation, which was supported by Fox, Sheridan, the Earl of Surrey, and others of his own friends in addition to Pitt, Burke opposed it in a very powerful speech, followed by Mr. Dundas, Lord North, Mr. W. W. Grenville, and Lord Mulgrave—exhibiting on this question a complete disjunction of party opinions. In discussing Mr. Pitt's India Bill, he predicted several of its inefficiencies in a manner which a very competent judge of the matter (Sir John Malcolm) in a passing tribute to his memory as

one of the wisest men and greatest orators of our country, says have been realized to the letter.

He was not viewed however with much favour by many of the new members of the House. In common with Mr. Fox, he had incurred considerable odium, but unlike him had taken no pains to work it off. His habits being little laid out for popularity he did not now or at any time sufficiently court intercourse or familiarity with one class of society, or the noisy freedom, the shaking of hands and hoisting upon shoulders of another. The latter in fact were not much to his taste. A prejudice or combination, chiefly of the younger members of the House, was formed so strong against him, that the moment of his rising became a signal for coughing or other symptoms of pointed dislike, by men who had no chance of success in contending against him in any other manner. The speech introducing the representation to the King was not replied to, and towards its conclusion was received with affected laughter. On three India questions of minor moment, whether owing to the unpopularity of himself or the subject he was almost overpowered by continued and violent vociferation. And on another of these occasions instead of threatening, like a late distinguished leader of Opposition (Mr. Tierney), when similarly assailed, "to speak for three hours longer," he stopped short in his argument to remark, "that he could teach a pack of hounds to yelp with more melody and equal comprehension."

At another time having occasion to rise with papers in his hand, a rough country gentleman who had more ear perhaps for this *melody of the hounds* than for political discussion, exclaimed with something of a look of despair, "I hope the Honourable Gentleman does not mean to read that large bundle of papers, and bore us with a long speech into the bargain." Mr. Burke is said to have felt so much irritation that incapable of utterance for some minutes, he ran out of the House. "Never before," said the facetious George Selwyn, who told the story with great effect, "did I see the fable realized—a lion put to flight by the braying of an ass." To *muzzle the lion* became the colloquial term used at the time for these attempts to prevent his being heard; and as several of the younger friends of the Minister were among the principal actors concerned, he was accused of promoting it. It is certain that he then thought him

his most formidable opponent, chiefly on account of the variety of his powers which made it difficult to give him what Mr. Fox's less diversified mode of attack commonly received, a complete answer; and not unfrequently it ruffled his (Mr. Pitt's) temper. The same reason, that of "muzzling the lion" towards himself, has been assigned for the Minister allowing the inquiry into the conduct of Mr. Hastings to go on after having in the first instance decidedly opposed it. An able anonymous writer* of that day expresses his surprise at the indecorous interruptions "given to a man possessed of an eloquence with which all that remains of antiquity must lose in the competition." The truth was, they had been so frequent towards other popular men, that on a motion by Sir George Savile, a session or two before, the curious spectacle was exhibited of the Speaker (Mr. Cornwall) severely reprimanding a large body of members as "a set of gentlemen who spent most of their time elsewhere and did not deem it necessary to attend to any part of the debate in order that they might decide with decency, or vote with conviction."

Two letters from India afforded him some food for meditation.—One from Lord Macartney, Governor of Madras, which spoke of the local authorities and practices of that country quite in his own strain of censure, and as a scene which from its wretched system of management he would gladly quit at the first good opportunity—the other from Sir William Jones then at Calcutta, deprecating his supposed resentment should he form any connexion or friendship with Mr. Hastings, of which he had been erroneously informed.

Early in the year, he had lost by death his friend Sir George Savile, one of the most amiable men of his time, with whom a close intimacy commenced about the time of his entry into Parliament, and continued without interruption until dissolved by that which dissolves all human connexions. Sir George was a man of upright intentions, warm heart, and considerable talents. To the latter it is no disparagement to say that in their parliamentary exertion he was frequently believed to be obliged to Mr. Burke for suggesting, shaping, and revising some of the measures he introduced into the House; obligations indeed incurred in

* Dr. Towers, then writing in the *New Annual Register*.

common with every other member of the party. To his virtues and merit Mr. Burke paid an animated tribute in his speech at Bristol in 1783, alluding to the act in 1778 for relieving the Roman Catholics. To this worthy man and upright senator a very handsome statue is erected in York cathedral. He is represented leaning on a pillar, holding in his hand a scroll on which is written. "The Petition of the Freeholders of the County of York;" meaning the petition for parliamentary reform, on which question however he and his eloquent friend wholly differed. On the front of the pedestal which is six feet high, the height of the monument being altogether sixteen, is an inscription, from the pen of Burke.

In the autumn, his house at Beaconsfield was entered in the night, and robbed of plate and other articles of value; in allusion to the conveyance which it appeared brought the thieves from London to effect it and carried them and their booty back, he used familiarly to term it the *curricie* robbery. In London not long before his house had suffered by a similar depredation. Soon afterward he found time to draw up for a distant relative, Mr. E. P. Burke, the outline of a course of "Lectures on Arts, Manufactures, and Commerce," intended to be delivered by that gentleman at Merchant Taylor's Hall, Bristol. They are said to have borne the stamp of his characteristic genius, knowledge, and comprehensive acquaintance with commercial principles and history.

About the same time death withdrew from this world his old acquaintance Dr. Johnson, from whom in the vicissitudes of twenty-seven years, no estrangement occurred to interrupt their mutual admiration and regard. Visiting him in his last illness with some other friends, Mr. Burke remarked that the presence of strangers might be oppressive to him. "No, Sir," said the dying moralist, "it is not so and I must be in a wretched state indeed when *your* company would not be a delight to me." He followed him to the grave as a mourner; and in contemplating his character, applied to it a fine passage from Cicero which might equally suit his own—*Intentum enim animum quasi arcum habebat, nec languescens succumbebat senectuti.*—When some one censured Johnson's general rudeness in society, he replied with equal consideration and truth, "It is well, when a man comes to die, if he has nothing worse to accuse himself of than some harshness in conversation." He

often remarked that Johnson was greater in discourse than even in writing; and that Boswell's Life was the best record of his powers. In 1790 he became one of the committee formed to erect a statue to his memory, when a difference of opinion arose as to where it should be placed, Reynolds proposing St. Paul's, while Sir Joseph Banks, Metcalf, Boswell, and Sir William Scott preferred Westminster Abbey. In the former opinion Burke coincided, observing with his usual pleasantry—"That it would be indeed 'robbing Peter to pay Paul' (alluding to the saints to which they are dedicated) but still the reasons for transfer were so forcible as to make him think it rather an exchange than robbery."

Shortly before this he had lost by death another highly esteemed friend to whom allusion has been already made, General Haviland. Residing at Penn, in the neighbourhood of Beaconsfield, a close intimacy had commenced between the families, which cemented by the subsequent union of the son of the late General with the niece of Mr. Burke, continued with the utmost cordiality through life. The General who had spent nearly all his days in the army, was a high spirited and most honourable old soldier, a companion of Wolfe in America, and who became personally known to, and highly esteemed by George III. through some anecdotes told of his romantic generosity. One of these may be mentioned. Having applied twice or thrice ineffectually for a commission for his own son, a vacancy at length occurred in his own regiment the 15th, to which it was considered he had the right of nomination. While the family congratulated him on the opportunity which thus presented of accomplishing his wishes without further trouble, he said to their surprise he had altered his determination;—the boy could not have it. "There is," said he, "young —, who is more in want of it than he is; his father gave me a commission when he might otherwise have disposed of it, and being now dead and his family unprovided for, it is but right I should repay to the son what I owe to the father.—My boy must wait;"—and the commission was given away accordingly.

Mrs Salisbury Haviland, his lady, well known among many of the wits of the time for possessing an original and vigorous mind, was much admired by Mr. Burke who when in town frequently corresponded with her on the topics of

the day. She had a taste for poetry and wrote verses with ease and spirit. Her sisters, Mrs. Balfour and Miss Aston who lived with her after the death of her husband, were likewise superior women; and the former, who possessed a lively disposition, is said to have given Garrick the first idea of the character of the *Irish Widow* in his farce of that name, by a trick played off in a familiar party upon the simplicity of Goldsmith, which I have related elsewhere.*

Among their acquaintance was Dean Marlay, frequently mentioned by Boswell for sprightly and sociable qualities, who having passed a very agreeable day in the society of these ladies, sent them the following jeu d'esprit:—

HUMBLY INSCRIBED TO TWO CELEBRATED COQUETTES.

An answer to Mrs. Haviland, who asked or ought to have asked, "What is Coquetry?"

Haviland.—What's Coquetry? *His Reverence* —April weather,
 Not the same two hours together;
 Like a weather-cock still turning,
 Now 'tis freezing, now 'tis burning;
 Now 'tis tender, now 'tis rude,
 Now 'tis formal like a prude;
 Youthful, beautiful, and blooming,
 While submissive still presuming;
 Every winning art expert in,
 Lovely, lively, and uncertain;
 Flatt'ring promises still making,
 Promises each moment breaking;
 Sweetly trifling, gaily prating,
 Love in every breast creating;
 'Tis a dear bewitching sprite,
 Made of beauty, wit, and spite;
 Form'd to deceive and to subdue,
 And look like——false Balfour and you.

During the summer, Mr. Burke received a visit from his old friend Mr. Shackleton and his daughter, an ingenious lady already introduced to the reader under the name of Leadbeater, who charmed with the situation of his park and its vicinity, wrote a short poem descriptive of the scenery and mansion, with a faithful sketch of the owner. To this he wrote a flattering reply, and a criticism exhibiting his taste and judgment on what a descriptive piece should be.

* Life of Goldsmith, 1837, vol. ii. p. 485.—Of this work two or three piracies have appeared, equally disreputable to their compilers and disservice of original information.

His benevolence was frequently shown in administering medicine, of which he knew a little of the simpler parts, to his poorer neighbours in the country, when they were unable to pay for more regular advice or too distant to procure it immediately; and also to his servants and family. On one occasion in mixing some medicines for Mrs. Burke, he used a wrong one by mistake, and finding it likely to be productive of serious consequences, experienced indescribable agony for a few hours until assured there was no farther danger. In allusion to this unpleasant occurrence, he sometime afterwards used to say to Dr. Brocklesby, "I mean to leave off practice, Doctor, for I fear I am little better than a quack." Mrs. Leadbeater, in one of her visits at Beaconsfield discovered him when sought for some other purpose, busily occupied in preparing a large stock of pills for the indigent of the vicinity—an employment in which he displayed considerable dexterity.

To beggars he was kind and charitable, showing more compassion to the itinerant class than is generally exhibited, in conformity with the customs of Ireland, where from there being then no poor laws, more consideration was displayed to such objects than in this country. All the silver which he carried out in going for a walk was usually disposed of in this way, so that if a hackney coach brought him to the door, he was unable to discharge it without procuring the means from the house. He would not admit that persons refused to assist travelling mendicants from policy. "No, Sir," said he, in conversation on the subject, "it is only an apology for saving their money." Some years after this time, when enfeebled by infirmity and grief for the loss of his son, he was walking in the neighbourhood of Beaconsfield with two ladies, one of them his niece, a beggar-man rather advanced in years accosted them requesting assistance. Mr. Burke after a few questions gave him a shilling. "I wonder, my dear Sir," remarked one of the ladies, with rather more freedom or caution than he thought necessary, as they walked on, "you should bestow upon those people who are generally worthless characters, so much. What you have just now given will be spent in *gin*." "Madam," replied he emphatically, after a pause, and assuming a grave aspect, "he is an old man;—and if *gin* be his comfort, let him have *gin*."

CHAPTER IX.

Count de Mirabeau—Speech on the Nabob of Arcot's debts—Report of the Shipwreck of his Son—Impeachment of Mr. Hastings—Peroration on opening the Charges—Visit to Ireland by Mr. Burke—Conversations with a Gentleman in London—Letters to Lord Charlemont—Mr. Hardy's account of him—Preface to Bellendenus—Epitaph on the Marquis of Rockingham.

EARLY in this year (1785), he received on a short visit at Beaconsfield the celebrated Count de Mirabeau, destined afterwards to figure so prominently in the French Revolution. He had come to England on some literary projects, was already well known and received by several persons of distinction, among whom were Lord Lansdowne and Sir Gilbert Elliot. By the latter, with whom he had been school-fellow, he was introduced to Burke, as indeed were most other eminent foreigners who found their way to England; but we have no record of what either of these personages then thought of the other. During the reign of the former over the National Assembly, however, whole speeches of the Irish orator were pressed into his service and unscrupulously used as his own—a proceeding adopted by him towards many other writers likewise, whose arguments or manner assisted such views as he had in prospect. The response of Burke was by no means so complimentary; for writing in February, 1791, shortly before the French leader's death, and when his projects for the re-establishment of the Royal authority were unknown in England, he thus wrote jocularly to a Mr. Woodford in allusion to the Abbé Maury, paying him a visit—"I have had the Count de Mirabeau in my house; will he (the Abbé) submit afterwards to enter under the same roof? I will have it purified and expiated, and I shall look into the best *formulas* from the time of Homer downwards for that purpose. I will do everything but imitate the Spaniard, who burned his house because the Cométable de Bourbon had been lodged in it. That ceremony is too expensive for my finances."

In the session commencing 25th January 1785, no notice being taken of the India Company's affairs in the Speech from the Throne, Mr. Burke moved an amendment supported by Mr. Fox. In allusion to the Governor General he observed, that "there was at that moment in India as great a phenomenon as ever the world had produced—a person who stood not as a delinquent, but as a criminal in the eyes

of that House—whose criminal charge was on the records of their journals, and whose recall had been ordered by that House. Nevertheless, in defiance of their authority, that criminal was at this moment commanding our armies and directing the expenditure of our revenues in Bengal.” *He likewise took part on the subject of the Westminster scrutiny, in which the Minister was accused of showing as much resentment towards Mr. Fox, as he had done in the preceding session towards the Member for Malton. On the question of the cotton tax; on that of the treatment of convicts under sentence of transportation; on the sinking fund; and in addition to others of less moment, on the Irish commercial propositions, he took part. Though siding chiefly with Opposition on this point, he was less active than usual on the latter, a feeling of delicacy preventing him as he said in reply to an allusion from Mr. Pitt, from balancing minutely and invidiously conflicting claims between the country of his nativity and that of his adoption. The latter had raised him from nothing to stations of high public trust and honour, with the power to legislate not for any one class of persons, or for any one spot however dear that spot might be to him, but for the general interests of the kingdom at large.*

The Minister’s motion for reform in the representation drew from Burke some pointed animadversions, demanding how *he* of all men could assume that the people were not sufficiently represented in that House, when he daily boasted that his own place and preponderance there were solely owing to the voice of the people? The argument was unanswerable. On the government bill for regulating the public offices which Sheridan termed a mere ratecatching measure, he was equally severe, and continuing the allusion to matters of petty reform, ludicrously quoted—

“ Mice and rats, and such small deer,
Had been Tom’s food for seven long year—”

while he contrasted its biting and impracticable economy with the profusion countenanced in India, which would ultimately fall on the shoulders of England. This theme, India, now chiefly occupied all his thoughts, as he thus expressed it—“ At all hours and seasons, in the retirements of summer, in the avocations of the winter, and even amid the snows (alluding to the ill reception he had experienced the pre-

ceding session) that had lately been showering on my head." Besides the amendment to the Address already noticed, he subsequently supported motions by other members on the same fruitful subject of India.

But his great effort of the session, February 28th, was on the debts of the Nabob of Arcot, one of those outpourings of a fertile and vigorous intellect which on an unpromising theme and under the disadvantage of rising last in the debate, seemed to combine all that could instruct, dazzle, and even overpower the hearer. It has been said to be in some parts florid. But in energy, in rhetorical address, in a minute knowledge of India and especially of the intricacies of the question itself, in the boldness of his attacks upon those of the Company's servants who were considered by their intrigues to have laid the foundation of these debts, in the clearness of his narrative and detail, it was deemed equal to any thing ever delivered in Parliament. The oppressions exercised upon the neighbouring state of Tanjore by the Nabob and his agents, were known to Burke from private information, as well as from public documents. He characterized the chief agent and counsellor of his Highness on these occasions, Mr. Benfield, as "the old betrayer, insulter, oppressor, and scourge of a country which has for years been an object of an unremitted, but unhappily an unequal struggle, between the bounties of Providence to renovate and the wickedness of man to destroy." Some of the spirit of the speech is said to have evaporated in the printed report. On this subject he had in the following month some correspondence with Lord Thurlow.

Shortly after this period he suffered great agony of mind for a time in consequence of a newspaper account of the loss in a violent storm off the coast of Holland, of a Harwich packet in which his son had embarked for the continent. Fortunately the report proved untrue. He arrived in safety, and after visiting Holland, Flanders, and some of the adjoining states, was received with some distinction in the Court and capital of France. During his father's tenure of power, he had been appointed joint-receiver with Dr. King of the revenues of the Crown Lands, held for life. After the death of the Marquis of Rockingham, Earl Fitzwilliam had made him auditor of his accounts.

The re-election of the Member for Malton as Lord Rector of Glasgow University having taken place in November 1784 he proceeded thither toward the end of August this year

accompanied by Mr. Windham, to be again installed. The ceremony finished, he made a tour of some length to the usual picturesque resorts of travellers in that country, and experienced as most admirers of Nature and her works acknowledge no slight pleasure from their number and variety. No particulars of this journey seem to have been preserved, excepting a romantic story of meeting by accident with a young lady, who being unable to enter the matrimonial state, in consequence of her lover having no provision for their support, the travellers like true knights-erran succoured the distressed damsel by procuring an appointment for her betrothed in India. Burke writing in the end of October to Shackleton thus shortly adverts to the excursion—"I have had a very pleasant tour over a considerable part of Scotland, and have seen the works both of God and man, in some new and striking forms."

At the opening of the next session, January 24th, 1786, he entered on one of the most tempestuous scenes of his life—nearly the whole of which was a political storm—in the prosecution of the late Governor General of India, who had recently arrived in England. This storm indeed was of his own creation. But it was raised in no spirit of passion, interest, or malevolence. To himself it became a sacrifice of ease to the great interests as he conceived of justice and humanity, in order to restrain the strong from ill-doing, and throw the shield of law and principle over the most helpless race of people under British dominion. Such was his design; and in the opinions of statesmen it has been fully accomplished.*

Much consideration is required adequately to appreciate the degree of moral courage necessary for this undertaking. Nothing so arduous or laborious had ever fallen to a member of the English legislature; for though the work was in some measure divided, infinitely the greater part fell to his share. It was indeed a moral labour of Hercules. Not only uncommon capacity of mind was required, but the most effective and popular, and Parliamentary *working* talents; an utter disregard of difficulty; a vast fund of local knowledge; a perseverance in mental and bodily labour not to be conquered; a contempt for obloquy and reproach of every kind such as few men had fortitude enough to encounter; an acquaintance with the powers, interests, habits, actual condition,

* Lord John Russell's *Memorials and Correspondence of Fox*, vol. ii. His Lordship has a good passage on this subject.

intrigues, and even villanies of nearly all India, such as no man and scarcely any body of men out of the country, could be expected to possess.

The accused, besides, was no inconsiderable man. He was supposed to possess the personal good opinion of the King.* He had acquired the favour of the Board of Control. He enjoyed the support of the India Company which had profited by his sway. He had aggrandized the nation itself, which satisfied with its acquisitions, felt little curiosity to inquire into the means employed to procure them; and in fact the subject for two or three years previously would scarcely be listened to in Parliament. He had governed a vast empire for a series of years, and was of course enabled to profit by the weight, in all cases great, which authority bestows. He had not only amassed a competent fortune himself, but what was of more consequence to his political interests, had enriched more men than any half dozen Prime Ministers of England put together. He had necessarily many friends and a vast number of apologists, several of whom were in Parliament, others in different situations of influence, who from the oblique morality with which all India questions were treated, scarcely considered as offences there, what in England they would have stigmatized as unquestionable crimes. In addition to all these, the evidence had to come from a vast distance: qualified by some who thought the blame ought rather to fall on the agents than on the principal; by some who hesitated to condemn proceedings which had been the source of their own gain: by some who shrunk from the odium of coming forward or being considered as public accusers; all which circumstances were observed to operate powerfully in the subsequent evidence given upon the trial of the Governor General.

Against all these considerations, against the opinions of some of his own party, and in some degree against his own personal interests, Mr. Burke determinedly persevered, winning a large portion of the nation over to his opinion before the end of the session, and what was of no less moment, con-

* During the trial a caricature was exhibited of Mr. Hastings trundling his Majesty in a wheelbarrow, with the label, "What a man buys he may sell." "Well," said the King good-humouredly on seeing it, "I have been represented in many extraordinary situations, but in a wheelbarrow is something new."

straining the Minister who displayed symptoms of hostility at first to the subsequent observance of impartiality. If he eventually failed in convicting the accused on account of legal technicalities it is less matter for wonder, than that under so many obstacles and in the teeth of so many powerful interests, he could carry the cause to a decision. But the sentence of the House of Lords was a matter of minor importance in his opinion. The moment the impeachment was voted by the Commons, he felt as he often said that the great end for which he undertook it—public justice—was answered. The result he foresaw from the first. Writing to Mr. Francis preliminary to a visit from him and Mr. Fox, in Dec. 1785 on the course of proceedings to be adopted toward the late Governor General of India, he states their difficulties, the varieties of opinion, and the opposition to be encountered from friend and foe pretty clearly. "Speaking for myself, my business is not to consider what will convict Mr. Hastings (a thing we all know to be impracticable) but what will acquit and justify myself to those few persons, and to those distant times, which may take a concern in these affairs and in the actors in them."

To those who knew little of his character, the motive for this gratuitous labour remained a puzzle, or was solved by the unfounded idea that it arose from slight shown by the Governor General to Mr. William Burke. It is possible indeed, remembering how the inquiry was forwarded by Mr. Fox, that some latent feeling existed of indirectly justifying the India bill by exposing to general indignation the enormities which that measure was meant to correct. But the great and direct inducement beyond all question, was a detestation of any thing like oppression or injustice inherent in the man. It was not simply a moral principle but an ingrafted feeling; too ardent and unrestrained for the imposing station he occupied in the country, but which had been shown in all the chief actions of his life, public and private.—In upholding against oppression the Commons of America at one time—the King, Nobility, and Clergy of France, at another; in resenting the tyranny attempted to be exercised over him by Hamilton in the early part of his life; and what he considered the harshness, reproach and injury shown him by Mr. Fox and others of the party towards its decline. "In whose breast," as he subsequently said of himself, "no anger,

durable or vehement, has ever been kindled but by what he considered as tyranny." His philanthropy and integrity were constantly eulogized in the House of Commons by all the eminent men most opposed to him on public affairs, and never more so than during the whole progress of this prosecution. It is necessary also to remember that it was no sudden burst of passion, no transient or immediate feeling of resentment, but adopted after much and serious deliberation. Since 1780, when, as member of the Select Committee of the House of Commons, the conduct of Mr. Hastings had been attacked and investigated before him, he had constantly recommended his recall, and expressed an opinion that he deserved punishment. He had no other dislike to that gentleman he said, than a conviction of his mis-government, persevered in against repeated remonstrances and orders. He knew nothing otherwise of him. He and the rest of the Committee had begun with Sir Elijah Impey and only picked up Mr. Hastings in their way. His attention once excited to a subject so important to the good of our Indian empire, there appeared ample matter for further inquiry; almost every fresh arrival from the East added to the list of alleged oppressions or offences by the Governor General. Strong dissatisfaction, alternating with votes of approbation, had been expressed at his conduct by the Court of Directors at home; but orders for recall were so intermingled with orders to remain, that to many not in the secret, the proceedings at the India House became a riddle. The main solution was, that the Directors thought many of his measures wrong and desired his return; the Proprietors on the other hand, simply found them profitable, and therefore wished him to remain.

In 1776 the former voted his recall. The latter body as was then in their power according to the charter, at a General Court rescinded the order. Shortly afterward Mr. Grant and Mr. Maclean, a former friend of Burke and now the confidential agent of Mr. Hastings, arrived and tendered the resignation of the latter, which was accepted. But the Governor General, finding himself taken at his word, denied having given that gentleman any such authority, and resolutely kept his station; while Maclean having perished at sea on his return from India, this extraordinary misunderstanding was never explained to the world. In 1779, 1780, 1781, in settling the government, he was continued. In

1782, Mr. Dundas as Chairman of the Secret Committee, moved and carried a string of severe resolutions against him, among others his recall, which was ordered accordingly; but the Proprietors having still by the constitution of the Company the power so to do, again negatived the order. At length in February 1785, he quitted Bengal of his own accord, just as Lord Macartney had been appointed to it from Madras, but whose assumption of the supreme authority it was declared by Mr. Hastings and his party they had determined to resist even by force, had that nobleman arrived in Calcutta before he embarked.

On reaching England, the Directors passed a vote of thanks for his long and meritorious services, though for years they had complained that his proceedings were most objectionable; that he despised their authority; and never paid the slightest regard to their orders when they happened to be at variance with his own opinions. And Mr. Dundas had already declared that "Mr. Hastings rarely quitted Calcutta that his track was not followed by the deposition of some prince, the desertion of some ally, or the depopulation of some country." All these circumstances, in addition to many specific and well-known offences, tended to confirm Mr. Burke in his purpose, and to believe that his motives at any rate for inquiring into the conduct of such a refractory and violent servant could not be questioned. Alluding to these during the preliminary proceedings he observed:

"Least of all could it be said with any colour of truth that he was actuated by passion. Anger, indeed, he had felt, but surely not a blameable anger; for who ever heard, of an inquiring anger, a digesting anger, a collating anger, an examining anger, or a selecting anger? The anger he had felt was an uniform, steady, public principle, without any intermixture of private animosity; that anger, which five years ago warmed his breast, he felt precisely the same, and unimpaired, at that moment." "Let who will shrink back," said he, touching on the same theme, in 1785, "I shall be found at my post. Baffled, discountenanced, subdued, discredited, as the cause of justice and humanity is, it will be only the dearer to me. Whoever, therefore, shall at any time bring before you any thing toward the relief of our distressed fellow-citizens in India, and towards the subversion of the present most corrupt and oppressive system for its go-

vernment, in me shall find a weak, I am afraid, but a steady, earnest, and faithful assistant." Ten years afterward when the trial had been disposed of, he again alluded to his motives. "Were I to call for a reward (which I have never done), it should be for those (services) in which for fourteen years, without intermission, I have showed the most industry, and had the least success; I mean in the affairs of India. They are those on which I value myself the most; most for the importance; most for the labour; most for the judgment; most for constancy and perseverance in the pursuit. *Others may value them most for the intention. In that surely they are not mistaken.*"

The belief in Mr. Hastings's guilt was very general in India as well as in England, by those who had the nearest views of what was going on. Among these in addition to many others, was the late Mr. Charles Grant whose knowledge of India, integrity, and abilities were equally unquestioned, and to whom for eminent services a statue has been voted by the Company. To the last moment of his life this gentleman stedfastly persevered on all occasions in the strongest censure of the obnoxious Governor General, and as firmly resisted every proposition that could be considered complimentary to his memory. From authority which the writer cannot question, he is likewise informed, that the late Marquis Wellesley who ought to have a sound judgment on the matter, entertained no doubt whatever of the guilt of Mr. Hastings, particularly on the first three charges; and that he ought to have been convicted. In addition to this, it is well known that Mr. Dundas under Lord North's administration, was the first accuser of Mr. Hastings; procured the vote for his recall; and threatened him with punishment. Mr. Francis also, in the debate in 1788 on the propriety of making him a manager of the impeachment boasted, that "he supplied the information, furnished the materials, and *prompted the prosecution*, and therefore he would not stand aloof if the house thought proper to employ him in that capacity." It is therefore extremely unjust to consider Mr. Burke, as is frequently done through ignorance or malice, either as the original accuser or as the *only* instigator of a prosecution which unquestionably arose from pure motives in several eminent men.

The obloquy cast upon him during the trial, in books,

pamphlets, and newspapers, in verse and in prose, in private and in many public discussions not excepting even the courts of law, was as great as that thrown on the Governor General. A stranger in reading the publications of the day, would have been almost at a loss to tell the accused from the accuser. His language on all occasions, the arrangements during the proceedings, the smallest inadvertency committed by the other managers, and particularly the length of the trial which arose more from the nature of the House of Lords as a Court of Judicature and the mode of defence, than from the managers, proved fruitful themes of abuse directed against Mr. Burke alone. To forward this sums of money to the amount it is said of £20,000 were distributed for that purpose to the press. An imprudent dispute between the agent of the prisoner, Major Scott, and a printer of a newspaper, disclosed a bill which excited some amusement when made public, the items regularly marked and charged running thus—"Letters against Mr. Burke," "Strictures upon the conduct of Mr. Burke," "Attacking Mr. Burke's veracity," the latter being charged at five shillings—a small sum he jocularly remarked, for such a purpose—and others of similar import. In addition to these, squibs without number issued from various quarters, one of which, Simkin's letters, though not the best of their class, formed a tolerably fair and amusing satire on the conduct and speeches of the chief managers, without more censure of Burke than such things prescriptively claim. The opening alludes to one of his peculiarities:—

With respect to processions, and taking of places,
By Masters and Judges, and Lordships and Graces;
According to promise, I now shall describe
The procession of Burke, and his eloquent tribe.
First Edmund walks in at the head of the group
The powerful chief of that powerful troop;
What awful solemnity's seen in his gait,
While the nod of his head beats the time to his feet.

An epigram, said to be written by Lord Ellenborough, then one of the prisoner's counsel and the idea of which though not acknowledged, is borrowed from Mr. Burke himself in a passage in the letter to Lord Kenmare, was delivered to him in a note just before opening one of the charges, in order that the sting might discompose him in the performance of this duty, but he calmly conveyed it to his

pocket without emotion. It is remarkable that the reputed author of this, after being repeatedly reprimanded on the trial for his violence of language, lived to exhibit on the judgment seat where above all other places it is least excusable, the irritability which he had censured in Mr. Burke, for whom as an accuser at the bar there was some apology. A conviction of the guilt of the Governor General remained in the mind of the latter to the last hour of his life, and was expressed to his friends whenever the subject was mentioned. To others not so intimate he was nearly as unreserved.

During the progress of the investigation, Mr. Pitt repeatedly said that it was conducted by the right honourable gentleman (Mr. Burke) with every degree of fairness, openness, and candour, of which it was susceptible. "The affairs of India," said Mr. Fox, "had long been hid in a darkness as hostile to inquiry as it was friendly to guilt; but by the exertions of ONE MAN, these clouds had been dissipated. His ardent virtue, his sublime genius, and that glowing enthusiasm so essential to both, had, with the application of years, left them nothing of information at present to desire." He frequently stated that no man but his right honourable friend could have accomplished the more than Herculean task of the investigation itself, or surmounted the incessant and vexatious difficulties at every step thrown in his way. These, during the trial in the Lords, were of an extraordinary nature, scarcely a point of evidence being admitted against the prisoner without quibble and cavil, discussion and adjournment, and ultimately from the forms of law, a decision in his favour. No reader perhaps but a lawyer will be satisfied with the course of the trial. Few conscientious men will be pleased with the result of it, or the means uniformly adopted to evade inquiry into the merits of the transactions themselves, which in the eye of morality will leave Mr. Hastings if not a guilty man, at least a suspected one. In the general opinion, as well as in that of an acute historian, if his accusers did not prove his guilt, he himself did not prove his innocence.*

On the question of delay in the trial urged pretty frequently in 1790, Mr. Burke alleged that, though nominally of some years' duration, it was in reality only sixty-four

* Mill's History of British India, vol. v.

days, at four hours each day. The managers could not possibly be responsible for the delays, prorogations, and adjournments of the House of Lords with which they had nothing whatever to do; that even sixty-four days was not an unprecedented thing in their own House, for an Election Committee had continued ninety days; and that as the number of the charges and the magnitude of the offences were greater than had ever been laid to the charge of any one impeached by that House, so no fair comparison could be drawn between the periods required for trial. Mr. Pitt repeatedly declared, that, looking to the magnitude and difficulty of the undertaking, he did not think there was any ground for the charge of delay. If any unnecessary delay existed, assuredly it rested not with the managers. Many attributed it to the artifices of the defendant or his lawyers. Mr. Dundas pointedly said, "there seemed no little art used in the clamour about delay, for it was always raised towards the end of a session, but never at the beginning of it when steps might possibly be taken to provide a remedy. No share of the blame rested with that House or with the managers. *If there were any delay in the trial, it lay he cared not who heard him or where his declaration might be repeated, at the door of the House of Lords.*" It appears by computation, that had the House sat as an ordinary Court of Judicature ten hours a day, the trial would have been finished in two months.

Another charge was the intemperance and asperity of his language towards the prisoner. To this it has been replied with great truth, that no prosecutor's temper was ever before so tried by difficulties of every kind, by objections, by cavils, by libels without number out of doors; by taunts, by irritating language, and indirect censure within; and towards the close of the trial by the obvious distaste towards the prosecution itself displayed by some members of the Court which he had to address. One remarkable instance of this excited general notice. On the 25th of May 1793, when cross-examining Mr. Auriol, and pushing him closely at some length on account of the obvious distaste of the witness to be as explicit as was desired, his old acquaintance the Archbishop of York who resumed his former privilege of being rude and even insolent, and had already evinced strong symptoms of impatience,—chiefly it was surmised because his son had been in high and profitable employments in India under Mr. Hastings, started up and said that "he examined

the witness as if he were examining not a gentleman but a pickpocket; that the illiberality of the managers in the course of the long trial could not be exceeded by Marat and Robespierre, had the conduct of the trial been committed to them." Burke, with great dignity and forbearance, and his accustomed presence of mind replied, "I have not in my public capacity heard one word of what has been spoken, and I shall act as if I had not." "Upon reading the printed minutes of the evidence with due care," says an historian, with whom, however, from political causes, Mr. Burke does not stand so well as he otherwise might—"I perceive that Mr. Burke treated the witness as an unwilling witness, which he evidently was: as a witness who though incapable of perjury was yet desirous of keeping back whatever was unfavourable to Mr. Hastings, and from whom information unfavourable to Mr. Hastings if he possessed it must be extorted by that coercion which it is the nature and to the very purpose of cross-examination to apply. Of the tones employed by Mr. Burke, the mere reader of the minute cannot judge; but of the questions there set down, there is not one which approaches to indecorum, or makes one undue insinuation. It was the Right Reverend Prelate, therefore, who betrayed an intemperate mind, which as ill accorded with the justice of the case, as with the decencies of either his judicial or sacerdotal character."*

The facts of the trial which immediately relate to the chief manager are speedily told. On the 16th of June 1785, Mr. Hastings arrived in England; and on the 20th Mr. Burke gave notice of an inquiry into his conduct next session. Accordingly, the very day of the meeting of Parliament, Major Scott trusting it appeared to a belief that the minister would negative the motion for inquiry, called upon Mr. Burke to proceed; and received the reply of the Duke of Parma to Henry IV. of France when challenged to bring his forces into the field and instantly decide their disputes—that he knew very well what to do, and had not come so far to be directed by an enemy. Mr. Fox declared that if his Right Hon. friend did not bring it forward, other members should supply his place; a sufficient indication that it was a general, not as was said, an individual measure. In February and

* Mill's History of British India, vol. v. pp. 181-82.

March, Mr. Burke moved for various papers, and declared his intention to proceed by impeachment at the bar of the House of Lords. In April the charges were delivered in. June the 1st he opened the first charge,—that of driving the Rohillas from their country—which though formerly reprobated by the House as an iniquitous proceeding was now held not to afford matter for crimination. To the second brought forward by Mr. Fox, that of the tyranny exercised over the Rajah of Benares, Mr. Pitt assented, when the friends of the Governor General turning round upon the Minister, accused him loudly of treachery, asserting they had been led by hints and promises to expect a different result. The remaining charges were gone through in the succeeding session, commencing 25th January 1787, and approved in general by the Minister, Mr. Sheridan opening with the celebrated speech on the Begum charge. A committee of impeachment was then formed. On the 25th of April the articles were delivered in by the chairman, Mr. Burke; on the 9th of May considered; when Mr. Pitt, in the very strongest language he could use voted heartily and conscientiously he said for the impeachment. Next day Mr. Burke accused the prisoner at the bar of the House of Lords, in the name of the Commons of England.

After a few preliminary proceedings, in the session of 1787-1788, in which he complained of being wholly crippled by the rejection of Mr. Francis as a member of the Committee, Westminster Hall was opened in form the 13th of February, when he led the procession thither, being as well as the other managers in full dress, followed by the House of Commons, Clerks of Parliament, Masters in Chancery, the Serjeants-at-law, Judges, House of Peers, and Royal Family, the Prince of Wales being last. Two days were occupied in preliminary business. On the 15th, before eight o'clock in the morning, though the proceedings did not commence before twelve, the Hall was crowded to excess, one hundred and sixty-four Peers being also present, anxious to hear the opening speech, of which the historian of the trial gives the following account. "Mr. Burke immediately rose and made his obedience to the Court; every eye was at this moment rivetted upon him. 'He stood forth he said at the command of the Commons of Great Britain as the accuser of Warren Hastings.' Mr. Burke then stopped for above a minute

at the end of which he resumed, and continued his speech for two hours and a half. It was grave and temperate yet pathetic and affecting. Every expression and sentiment was appropriate; and though in the progress of it, he led the ignorant to the most familiar acquaintance with the origin of the crimes and evils of India, he astonished the most knowing with the new aspect he gave to the whole, after it had been so long agitated and thoroughly discussed: first having apostrophized the tribunal before which he stood—congratulated his country on possessing so powerful an instrument of justice, and so authoritative a corrector of abuse—and hoped that no corruptions would ever taint, and no societies of special pleading and of Old Bailey prevarication, be able to undermine it.”

The speech of the 16th, when the number of Peers present was increased to one hundred and seventy-five, occupied about three hours and a half, in which he severely commented upon the “geographical morality” as he happily termed it of Mr. Hastings: a set of principles suited only to a particular climate, so that what constituted peculation and tyranny in Europe, lost their name and essence in India. A fine burst of indignant eloquence occurred when alluding to the unlimited authority assumed by the Governor-General. “But Mr. Hastings had pleaded the local customs of Hindostan as requiring the coercion of arbitrary power. *He* indeed to claim arbitrary power! From whom could he derive, or by what audacity could he claim such a power? He could not have derived it from the East India Company, for they had none to confer. He could not have received it from his Sovereign, for the Sovereign had it not to bestow. It could not have been given by either House of Parliament—for it was unknown to the British Constitution!” After alluding to the laws of India as well as of England, and instancing the Koran—the Institutes of Timur—the Gentoo Code—all opposed to every idea of tyrannical usurpation as strong and steadfast as our own Statutes at large—he proceeded. “Talk to me any where of power, and I’ll tell you of protection! Mention a magistrate, and the idea follows of property! Show me any government, and you are to see the proposed interest of the governed! Power constituted otherwise is a monster—it is impossible!—in every system where there is any notion of the justice of God or the good of

mankind. To act or think otherwise is blasphemy to religion, no less than confusion in social order! For 'Every good and perfect gift is of God'—and what good gift of God to man can be more perfect than the innate idea of justice and mercy—the law written in our hearts the *primum vivens*, the *ultimum moriens*, of every being that has the boast of reason!"

The 18th was chiefly occupied in detailing the characters and horrible cruelties of some of the native agents of Government while grossly abusing their authority in the provinces. The 19th concluded this oration or series of orations, occupying about three hours each day: and so great was the effect of the whole upon his auditory that it was only after a considerable lapse of time and repeated efforts, Mr. Fox who had next to address the court, could obtain a hearing. From the illness of the King and the absence of the Judges, the proceedings did not commence till the 20th of April, 1789. Next day he began another powerful oration on the sixth charge of bribery and corruption. Each party soon accused the other of a wish to delay the proceedings, but the managers to obviate the charge on their part voluntarily determined to confine themselves to the more serious heads of delinquency, omitting the others for the sake of expedition. The re-assembling of the new Parliament in 1790, produced animated discussions in both Houses whether the impeachment had not abated by the dissolution of the old; which after much discussion was decided in the negative against the opinion of the law authorities. Public anxiety on the trial had however abated. The forms of the Court and the complicated nature of the investigation, presented invincible obstacles to that quick progress which is always necessary to keep alive popular interest on such occasions; and it continued without any other event of consequence than the severe speeches of the chief manager, often excited however by the annoyances he received, till April 23rd, 1795, when a verdict of acquittal passed; the Lord Chancellor voting with the minority who thought him guilty. The duty of the managers indeed had terminated in June preceding, by summing up on the different charges, Mr. Burke being the last; and his concluding oration, which commenced on the 28th of May, continued for nine days. The thanks of the House, moved

by Mr. Pitt and seconded by Mr. Dundas, were immediately voted to the managers.

Mr. Hastings, like every one else under similar circumstances, is fully entitled to the benefit of the verdict recorded in his favour. But when not content with this, he or his friends impugn the motives of the prosecutors, less reserve is necessary in adverting to his general character as an Indian ruler. He was a man of considerable powers of mind—bold, assuming, and energetic; possessed of that species of energy which in pushing its own views or interests seldom stopped to consider the rights, or condition, or feelings of others who stood in his way. He forgot that Princes in India like those elsewhere, were entitled to some degree of consideration and delicacy from the station they occupied in their country; that good faith, justice, and sincerity are in some degree necessary even in dealing with persons of an opposite character; that moderation in the exercise of authority is commonly the wisest policy; that an arbitrary spirit assumed by the principal in government is sure to become tyranny in the subordinate agents. From long familiarity with the country, his mind had become perverted to the belief that he was at perfect liberty to adopt the practices of the Asiatics however unprincipled, in matters of government. He forgot that such conduct compromised English credit and character and might possibly have a tendency to shake our future hold upon this “Empire of opinion.” Many of his measures were undoubtedly brilliant; many very questionable; not a few at variance with all English ideas of justice or even expediency. In this opinion some of the latest and best writers on India concur.* He had so thoroughly entered into the spirit of an Asiatic monarch that he seemed to think the mere expression of his commands or wishes formed evidence enough of their utility and propriety; that among Hindoos, whenever the slightest necessity pressed on a point of policy, the end to be answered justified the means; a species of *geographical morality*, as Burke emphatically termed it, which he handled in the severest terms. Just in the same spirit, and on many of the same pleas, did the late ruler of France put his foot on the necks of the prostrate kings and nations of Europe; and in the page of

* Mill's History of India—Malcolm's Political History of India; *passim*.

history the verdict which condemns the one cannot wholly acquit the other.

To try the Governor-General then was a matter of positive duty in order to clear the character of the nation. To acquit him was perhaps a measure of necessity due to the quibbles of law of which he invariably took advantage; to the ill-defined nature of his power; to the acknowledged difficulties by which he was sometimes beset; and to the spirit of some of his instructions which to gratify the cupidity of the proprietors of India stock in Europe, seemed to embody the pith of the thrifty advice—"make money, honestly if possible, but at all events make money." He succeeded in pouring into their coffers a sum of nine millions, by means which no glossing or apology can make pure. The length of the trial indeed formed no inconsiderable punishment of itself. But the investigation did much good by evincing that though the Legislature had slumbered over the wrongs of the Indian people, impunity to their oppressors was no longer to be expected. Its remissness hitherto had been the chief cause for the continuance of abuse. Had the conduct of several others whom Mr. Dundas previously accused been subjected to a similar ordeal, Mr. Hastings would not have attempted or continued his more objectionable proceedings in the face of certain inquiry and probable punishment; and no one since has dared to imitate him.*

* These opinions, written thirty years ago, have recently received further confirmation from a distinguished Statesman of the present day. Burke's labours therefore have not been in vain.

"This course of cupidity and fraud (in India) of robbery and oppression was brought to a close by the impeachment of Warren Hastings. The mind of Mr. Burke comprehended the vast extent of the question, and his genius animated the heavy mass of materials which his industry had enabled him to master. He enlisted in this cause the powerful reasoning of Fox and the brilliant fancy of Sheridan. After a time he succeeded in gaining the support of Mr. Pitt, and armed against the former governor of India the great battery of impeachment. Whether the Minister was convinced by the evidence which threw so full a light on the misdeeds of Warren Hastings, or whether he was glad to protect himself from the ambition of a rival by acceding to a prosecution against him, the effect was no less certain. For years Mr. Burke persevered in his great task. Neither the dilatory plea of a dissolution of Parliament, nor the appalling earthquake of the French Revolution (to none more appalling than to him) ever distracted his attention from his great Indian enterprise. The speeches delivered by him in Westminster Hall are great monuments of

Memorable as the trial is for the space it will occupy in history and the excitement it produced in the nation, it is still more remarkable for the displays, or rather feats of genius in its conductors, wholly unparalleled, "shaking the walls that surrounded them," in the words of Mr. Erskine, "with anathemas of super-human eloquence." It seemed an arena for the emulative oratory of Fox, Sheridan, Windham, Grey, and others, names that ennoble any page on which they are inscribed, who seemed on this question to be pitted for victory as much over each other as over the accused. But above them all beyond dispute stood Burke. He had devoted more attention to the subject, and in some degree staked his reputation that there were urgent grounds at least for inquiry. He was master of it at a time when few others knew or cared much about the matter. He had more at stake in the result, in consequence of its being represented, however untruly, as *his* prosecution. The reproach and misrepresentation to which it gave rise served not to damp, but increase and sharpen the energy of his mind, while the occasion was peculiarly suited to exhibit the vast extent of his knowledge and the unrivalled variety of his powers. All these considerations produced exertions without precedent or example; so extraordinary indeed that, upon a low calculation the whole of his speeches and writings connected with it, which at present occupy *seven* octavo volumes, would fill *five* others if fully collected; and to give an intelligible outline of each speech, paper, or report, would of itself make no inconsiderable book. The principal however are to be found in his works.

The greatest amazement even to those who knew him best, was excited by the opening speech or speeches of the impeachment, which a modern writer, adverse to the impeach-

industry and eloquence; they surpass in power those of Cicero when denouncing the crimes of Verres. Finally although the impeachment ended in an acquittal, its results were memorable and beneficial. Never has the great object of punishment, the prevention of crime, been attained more completely than by this trial. * * * Mr Hastings was acquitted, but tyranny, deceit, and injustice were condemned. India was saved from abominations disgraceful to the English name. * * * Thus, after the rejection of the India Bill and amid the rout of the Whig party, Mr. Burke and Mr. Fox succeeded in the great object of saving the Indian people from rapine and fraud."—*Lord John Russell's Memorials and Correspondence of Charles James Fox*, vol. ii. pp. 255, 256, 257.

ment itself, thus characterizes in the general terms employed at the time. "Never were the powers of that wonderful man displayed to such advantage as on this occasion; and he astonished even those who were most intimately acquainted with him by the vast extent of his reading, the variety of his resources, the minuteness of his information, and the lucid order in which he arranged the whole for the support of his object, and to make a deep impression on the minds of his hearers."

Nothing certainly in the way of fact, and little in theatrical representation, ever exceeded the effects produced among the auditory by the details of the cruelties of Debi Sing, which he gave on the third day, from the reports of Mr. Paterson who had been sent as commissioner to inquire into the circumstances. The whole statement* is appalling and heart-sickening in the extreme. A convulsive sensation of horror, affright, and smothered execration pervaded all the male part of his hearers, and audible sobbings and screams attended with tears and faintings, the female. His own feelings were scarcely less overpowering. He dropped his head upon his hands and for some minutes was unable to proceed; from this he recovered sufficiently to go on a little further, but being obliged to cease from speaking twice at short intervals, the Prince of Wales to relieve him at length moved the adjournment of the House. Alluding to the close of this day, the writer of the History of the trial, says—"In this part of his speech Mr. Burke's descriptions were more vivid, more harrowing, and more horrible, than human utterance on either fact or fancy, perhaps, ever formed before. The agitation of most people was very apparent—Mrs. Sheridan was so overpowered that she fainted: several others were as powerfully effected." Mrs. Siddons is said to have been one of the number.

"His powers," says a political adversary, "were never more conspicuous than on that memorable day, on which he exposed the enormities of a subaltern agent of oriental despotism—the tortures inflicted by his orders, the flagrant injustice committed by his authority, the pollution that

* See Burke's Works, 8vo. vol. xiii. p. 320—327; but the whole history of the monster Debi Sing, from p. 296 of the same volume, is a matter of deep interest. Mr. Burke said that £40,000 was the bribe paid for Debi Sing's appointment.

ensued in consequence of his sanction—when he painted agonizing Nature, vibrating in horrid suspense between life and destruction—when he described, in the climax of crimes, ‘death introduced into the sources of life,’ the bosoms of his auditors became convulsed with passion, and those of more delicate organs or weaker frame actually swooned away. Nay, after the storm of eloquence had spent its force, and his voice for the moment ceased, his features still expressed the energy of his feelings, his hand seemed to threaten punishment, and his brow to meditate vengeance.” The testimony of the accused party himself, is perhaps the strongest ever borne to the powers of any speaker of any country. “For half an hour,” said Mr. Hastings, “I looked up at the orator in a reverie of wonder; and during that space I actually felt myself the most culpable man on earth;” adding however, “But I recurred to my own bosom, and there found a consciousness that consoled me under all I heard and all I suffered.” Even the flinty temperament of the Chancellor, Lord Thurlow, was affected almost to producing what Burke applied to him on another occasion, *iron tears down Pluto’s cheek*; and judging by his expressions at the time, his faith in Mr. Hastings’ purity seemed staggered. Addressing the Peers some days afterwards, he concluded a handsome eulogium on the speech, by observing, “that their Lordships all knew the effect upon the auditors, many of whom had not to that moment, and perhaps never would recover from the shock it had occasioned.” The peroration, though it wants the last polish of the powerful pen of the author, is frequently mentioned as one of the most impressive in the records of judicial oratory.

Of his physical as well as mental exertions during this arduous investigation, some idea may be formed from the fact that for weeks together even at so late a period of the proceedings as 1793 he was constantly occupied between Westminster Hall and the House of Commons without quitting them, from nine o’clock in the morning until six or seven in the evening; and often when there was any debate of consequence, to a much later hour.

During the busiest sessions of the impeachment, 1786, 1787, and 1788, Mr. Burke’s attention was chiefly though not solely occupied by its details. The other measures in which he took part were in opposing “with an almost over-

whelming torrent of eloquence" in the language used at the time, the extension of power to the Governor-General of India by the East India Judicature Bill; and the declaratory act, which indirectly gave to Ministry much of the power more openly assumed by the India bill of Opposition in 1783, and for which they lost their places. He also came forward on the constitution of the governments of Canada; on a petition from the Lord Mayor, Aldermen, and Common Council against forestallers and regrators, the laws against whom as remnants of barbarism, he had been the means of repealing in 1772; in warmly approving, in the name of Opposition the plan for the consolidation of the Customs; the vote of money for the American loyalists; the treaty with the Landgrave of Hesse, and the renewal of our continental connexions; the provision for a meritorious public servant Sir John Skynner; in pushing forward the Slave Trade Abolition question now actively taken up by Mr. Wilberforce; and other less important matters.

The commercial treaty with France gave occasion to some bitterly-sarcastic sparring between him and the Minister. The aggression being on the part of the former may perhaps be put down to the account of party spirit, for in a subsequent speech on the same topic which Mr. Pitt notwithstanding their former encounter characterized as displaying a very singular share of ability, Mr. Burke differed from the other Members of Opposition in admitting that though he questioned the policy of that treaty, he had not the slightest fears of its injuring our own manufacturers. While speaking on this subject, and drawing a masterly comparison of the relative circumstances and capabilities of the two countries which drew cheers from both sides of the House, he took occasion to reply ably, but satirically, to some observations made on a former occasion by a member, who, being one of nine said to be returned by a noble Earl, had thence acquired the ludicrous appellation of *nine pins*. Mr. Fox, entering the House at the moment of the cheer, inquired of Mr. Sheridan the cause of it. "Oh! nothing of consequence," replied the wit, "only Burke knocking down one of the *nine pins*!"

The tension of mind produced by these great public labours found occasional relaxation by short summer excursions into different parts of the kingdom, and in frequent

correspondence with some old friends, and warm admirers among his countrymen. In 1785 he wrote to Dr. Beaufort, author of an able and well-known Memoir of a Map of Ireland, to procure for him a skeleton of the enormous species of moose deer, sometimes dug up in the bogs of that country, having an inclination, as he said, to see such a stately product of his native country placed in his hall. In October 1786, induced by "a sudden fire-side thought," as he expressed it, he and his son proceeded thither, remaining not more than a fortnight. He found time, however, to spend a day and night at Ballitore, the last opportunity that offered of seeing those early friends on their own soil; and on meeting with some of the old domestics of the establishment, not only remembered them perfectly, but behaved with his characteristic kindness and affability, an anecdote of which has been already related. His arrival in Ireland was announced in the chief newspapers in terms of warm admiration, and as these faithful daily chroniclers on the whole give passing opinions pretty fairly, one of them may be quoted—"After an absence of many years, the celebrated Irish orator and British Member of Parliament, Edmund Burke, has arrived in his native country. It is not flattery to say, that he is the boast of the English Senate, and the glory of the Irish nation." One of the first poets in that kingdom wrote some encomiastic verses on the occasion, which Mr. Burke repaid in prose more than equal in point of fancy and imagination to the tuneful effusion. It was deemed extraordinary that the University of Dublin did not then present him with the honorary degree of doctor of laws. But alas! how frequently is it that Ireland so often neglects her eminent sons, while other divisions of the kingdom ring with their merits?

In returning to England, the Reverend Dr. Campbell (author of a work on Ireland) happened to embark in the same packet: "I don't know any thing," said the Doctor to a friend in conversation on this subject, "that gave me so much pleasure as to find that I was to cross the Irish Hellespont in the company of a man of whom I had heard so much. I was extremely sorry that I had not the honour of being known to any one of the passengers who could introduce me to him, but it was not difficult to provoke Mr. Burke to conversation. We were in sight of the hill of Howth just as the

sun began to spread his beams. Mr. Burke enjoyed the beauties of the scenery; even the light clouds, which enveloped the top of the hill did not escape his attention: 'I wonder,' said he, 'that some of the Dublin milliners do not form a head-dress in imitation of those many-coloured clouds, and call it the Howth-cap.' His conversation was rich and captivating; he told me he had passed some days at Lord Kenmare's country-seat near the lakes of Killarney—that delightful spot, which taste seems to have selected from all that is beautiful in the volume of nature. But his description of it exceeded any thing I had ever read or heard before, particularly when he touched on the flowery race; good heaven! how he clothed the lily in new-born light, and the rose in virgin blushes; in short, it may be said, that he almost coloured to the eye whatever he described. Speaking of Lord Charlemont, he praised the gentleness of his manners, and the mildness of his temper, and concluded by comparing him to an old picture, whose tints were mellowed by time. When I talked of the state of learning in Ireland, he shook his head, folded his arms, and remained silent for a few minutes. In his person he is about five feet eight inches in height (he was taller), remarkably straight for his years, but his mind is more erect than his body. There is a good deal of placidity in his countenance, but nothing of striking dignity, and from his nose, I think that no man can sneer with more ease and effect if he chooses." Some weeks after his return, calling in at a place in town then much frequented by lovers of antiquity and of the arts, he fell into discourse with a gentleman, a Mr. T., who possessed good taste and feeling enough to preserve the following minutes of the conversation. It must ever be a source of keen regret that so many others who were honoured by his society did not prove themselves equally worthy of it by preserving his remarks.

"December the 6th, I happened to be in Mr. Townley's study; about eleven o'clock Mr. Burke and the Reverend Dr. King came in to view Mr. Townley's fine collection of statues. Mr. Burke seemed highly pleased with the whole, particularly that of the Baian Homer. Having paid many just compliments to the taste of the collector, he entered into conversation with me in so easy and friendly a manner, that if I was charmed a few minutes before with the taste and judicious reflection of the scholar, I was not less delighted

with the man. I shewed him an old manuscript copy of Homer (written I believe in the tenth century) ; he read a few passages in it with the greatest fluency, and criticised some of the critics who had written on the father of immortal verse. He invited me to breakfast with him the next morning, without so much as knowing my name. I promised to do myself that honour. My name is Edmund Burke, said he, just as he was going out of the door, I live in Gerard Street, Soho. I called the next morning about nine ; it was excessively cold ; I was shewn into the drawing-room, and in a few minutes Mr. Burke entered, and shook me by the hand in the most friendly manner.

“*Mr. B.* Have you been long out of Ireland, Sir? *T.* Some years. *Mr. B.* I paid that country a visit last summer, for the purpose of seeing a sister, a widow (Mrs. French, I believe) ; I had not seen it for twenty years before. *T.* It is very much changed within the last twenty years. *Mr. B.* Very much for the better. *T.* A spirit of industry has pervaded almost every quarter of the kingdom ; the morals of the people are improved, the country-gentlemen, in many parts, have relinquished the favourite amusements of the chase for the plough. *Mr. B.* Not as much as I could wish, but still more than I expected. As to agriculture, it may be called the eighth science. ‘We may talk what we please,’ says Cowley, ‘of lilies and lions rampant, and spread eagles in fields d’or or d’argent, but if heraldry were guided by reason, a plough in a field arable would be the most noble and ancient arms.’ *T.* Very true, Sir ; but it is said that the physical situation of Ireland is not favourable to the progress of tillage. *Mr. B.* I have often heard so, but experience proves the contrary. I saw, and I saw it with pleasure, in my little tour through some parts of the south of Ireland, two or three mountains clothed with luxuriant grass, that in my time were scarcely covered with barren heath, and half starved briars. Breakfast was now brought in ; young Mr. Burke and Dr. King were present. *T.* There are many passages in the ancient laws of Ireland that evince that agriculture flourished at a very early period in that country. *Mr. B.* Do you mean in the Brehon laws? I wish they were translated. *T.* I wish so too ; I am sure the University of Dublin is very much obliged to you, Sir, for the fragments which you presented of the Sea-

bright collection; they are valuable, as they contain many particulars that shed light on the manners and customs of the ancient Irish; but life is short, and in some respect it would be a pity that a man of genius should waste his time in such pursuits. *Mr. B.* To set a man of genius down to such a task, would be to yoke a courser of the sun in a mud cart. No, no, one of your cool, plodding, half-burnt bricks of the creation would be the fittest person in the world for such studies. *T.* Colonel Vallancey has laboured hard in that mine. *Mr. B.* Yes, in that race he has carried off the prize of industry from all his competitors, and if he has done nothing more he has wakened a spirit of curiosity in that line, but he has built too much on etymology, and that is a very sandy foundation. *Dr. King.* Ireland was famed for piety and learning at a very early period. *Mr. B.* Bede says so, and several other writers.

Dr. King. Can you speak Irish? *Mr. B.* I could speak a little of it when I was a boy, and I can remember a few words and phrases still. Poetry was highly cultivated by the ancient Irish; some of their Kings were so smitten with the love of song as to exchange the sceptre for the harp. *T.* The bards were very much protected and encouraged, but having indulged too much in satire and ribaldry, they were rather dreaded than esteemed; and at one time, the whole body was on the eve of being banished, if St. Columb-kill had not interfered. *Mr. B.* Sedulius was an excellent poet. *T.* Yes, his Latin poetry is very much admired. *Mr. B.* I read one of his hymns, that glowed with all the poet; the spirit of it might be said to ascend like the spirit of a Christian martyr in the midst of flames, but I never could light on his works. *T.* Nor I neither, but many of his verses are scattered through Colgan. *Mr. B.* Wherever they are scattered they will shine like stars. There was a poet that used to compose a little in his native language when I was a boy, I forget his name. *T.* Dignum, I suppose. *Mr. B.* Yes, yes; he could neither read nor write, nor speak any language but his own. I have seen some of his effusions translated into English, but was assured, by judges, that they fell far short of the original, yet they contained some graces 'snatched beyond the reach of art.' I remember one thought in an address to a friend; the poet advises him to lose no time in

paying his addresses to a young lady, for that she was of age, and, as a proof of it, 'upon her cheek he saw love's letter sealed with a damask rose.' Spenser, who was himself a bard, says that the Irish poetry was sprinkled with many pretty flowers. I wish they were collected in one nosegay. *T.* Yes, Sir, but there is no encouragement.—

Mr. B. No, not in this rust of the iron age. I wish, however, that some able, industrious, and patient pen would give a history of that country; it is much wanted. *T.* Great expectations were formed from Doctor Leland; he had leisure, talents, and almost every opportunity. When Lord Chesterfield was Viceroy of that kingdom, he was told that the Doctor intended to follow up a prospectus he had published on the subject of a voluminous history; his lordship one day at levee applauded the Doctor's intentions, but requested that he would make it a pleasant one. *Mr. B.*

Your pleasant historians should be read with caution. Leland promised a voluminous history, and so far he has kept his promise, but he has not done justice to all. *T.* It is said he had an eye to a mitre. *Mr. B.* Mitres and coronets will dazzle, but the truth is he had an eye to his bookseller, and to be candid, he went over it with a heavy hand. *T.* He has scarce dipped into the earlier ages.

Mr. B. He was no antiquary, but he might have said a little more on the subject. Hooker says, "the reason why first we do admire those things which are greatest, and secondly those things which are ancientest is, because the one is least distant from the infinite substance, the other from the infinite of God." Neither has he detailed with candour the feuds betwixt the houses of Desmond and Butler. *T.* The implacable hatred that existed betwixt the two is astonishing.

Mr. B. Struggles for power. I remember an anecdote of one of the Desmonds, I don't know which, who happened to be severely wounded in an engagement with a party of the Butlers; one of the latter threw him on his shoulders to carry him off in triumph, and as he passed along, tauntingly asked him, "Ah, Desmond, where are you now?" though quite feeble from the loss of blood, he collected all his expiring strength, and exclaimed, "Where am I? I am where I ought to be, on the neck of my enemy." The conversation turned on poetry, which Mr. Burke called "the art of substantiating shadows, and of lending exist-

ence to nothing." He praised Milton for the judicious choice of his epithets; this led him to say a few words on the use and abuse of those flowery adjectives, as Pontanus calls them, and lamented that some person of taste did not collect a garland of them out of the English Poets, as Textor had out of the Latin, which laid every classical scholar under great obligation to him, as he had plucked the fairest flowers that sipped Castalian dew."

"Geography, he said, was an earthly subject, but a heavenly study." One of the company happened to mention some gentlemen who intended to promote discoveries in the interior parts of Africa. Mr. Burke said, the intention was truly laudable; "Africa," he said, "was worth exploring; it seemed as if nature, in some great convulsion or revolution of her empire, had fled to that quarter with all her treasures, some of which she had concealed in the bowels of the earth, but the surface exhibited such abundance and variety of the vegetable and animal race, that a few miles would enrich the conquests of natural history. Witness on the very shores of that continent—the cabbage tree, that towered into all the sublimity of the pine, and the luxuriance of the spreading oak, and yet so tender that a few strokes of a sabre were sufficient to lay it prostrate on the earth. Africa was rightly called the mother of monsters, for there was not a sufficient number of minor animals elsewhere to feed the huge beasts that ranged the forests in that country. He was persuaded the interior was healthy, civilized, and so fertile, that the reaper trod on the heels of the sower. But the thirst of European avarice and cruelty had raised a barrier round the coasts of that quarter, which prevented all communication with the inoffensive inhabitants." "The sight of a white face was sufficient to make their curly locks stand on end. Death is natural to man, but slavery unnatural; and the moment you strip a man of his liberty, you strip him of all his virtues; you convert his heart into a dark hole, in which all the vices conspire against you." Towards the close of the conversation, he asked me if I was acquainted with Mr. Sheridan; I answered, that I was very sorry I could not boast that honour. I shall have the pleasure, said he, of introducing you to him, for he is one of the best natured men in the universe. He accompanied me, on my departure, to the door, and said that Dr. King

was a very learned man, assured me that he would be very happy to see me at Beaconsfield, "throw yourself into a coach," said he, "come down and make my house your inn."

Part of the time spent in Ireland was devoted to Lord Charlemont, whom he frequently termed "one of the chief ornaments of Dublin." To this nobleman he was in the habit of giving letters of introduction to friends of consideration proceeding thither on business or curiosity, among whom about this time were Mr. (afterwards Sir Philip) Francis, Mr. Nevill, Mr. Shippen an American traveller, and others. He also transmitted to his Lordship a bust of the late Marquis of Rockingham, with whom he had been intimate since 1752 when they became acquainted at Rome on their travels. It was a present from the Marchioness. Soon afterward, Mr. Burke on being elected a Member of the Royal Irish Academy, wrote him a letter of thanks as its President.

His Lordship in return thought he could not do better for his particular friends bound to England, than to consign them to the care of one so celebrated, and so capable of affording instruction and amusement. Among these about this time was Hardy, a member of the Irish House of Commons and destined to be his Lordship's biographer, who although already known to Burke, seemed to feel the charm of his society and amiable qualities with additional force during his visit. "He was," says that gentleman, "social, hospitable, of pleasing access, and most agreeably communicative. One of the most satisfactory days perhaps that I ever spent in my life, was going with him *tête à tête*, from London to Beaconsfield. He stopped at Uxbridge whilst his horses were feeding, and happening to meet some gentlemen of I know not what Militia who appeared to be perfect strangers, he entered into discourse with them at the gateway of the inn. His conversation at that moment completely exemplified what Johnson said of him, 'That you could not meet Burke under a shed without saying that he was an extraordinary man.' He was altogether uncommonly attractive and agreeable. Every object of the slightest notoriety as we passed along, whether of natural or local history, furnished him with abundant materials for conversation. The house at Uxbridge where the treaty was held during Charles the First's time; the beautiful and undulating grounds of Bulstrode formerly the residence of

Chancellor Jeffries; and Waller's tomb in Beaconsfield churchyard which before we went home we visited, and whose character as a gentleman, a poet, and an orator he shortly delineated but with exquisite felicity of genius, altogether gave an uncommon interest to his eloquence; and although one-and-twenty years have elapsed since that day, I entertain the most vivid and pleasing recollection of it."

Fond of good society and eminently fitted to adorn it, he was more especially pleased, like most men of taste, with that of intelligent women. He knew all that were of note, sought them out as a mark of respect; furnished conversation, wit, criticism, or advice as occasion required; and received in return that admiration of which the greatest may be proud, for to the honour of the sex it is yielded only to good as well as to eminent qualities. Among others with whom he was a favourite was Hannah More, who then figured largely in the literary and fashionable circles of the metropolis, and first become known to him in 1774 at the house of Sir Joshua Reynolds. Her sister wrote on the occasion—"Hannah has been introduced by Miss Reynolds to Edmund Burke (the sublime and beautiful Edmund Burke!)" At Mrs. Montague's, Mrs. Vesey's, David Garrick's, Mr. Elliot's and many more of the agreeable houses which adorned the London of that day, their intercourse was renewed; sometimes at her lodgings, at dinners, routes, or theatre, where once ensconced near the orchestra she found Burke, Sheridan, Dr. Warton, and Richard Burke, come to see the finished personation of Hamlet by Garrick. When rejected at Bristol she wrote from London—"Methinks I envy Burke that 'consciousness of his worth' which he must feel in considering himself rejected only because his talents were a crime. But Providence has wisely contrived to render all its dispensations equal, by making those talents which set one man so much above another of no esteem in the opinion of those who are without them." At Mrs. Vesey's she writes—"Mr. Burke came and sat next me for an hour. I complained of my false countrymen, and he repeated my epitaph in Redcliff church. I was astonished that he had not forgotten it. The Bishop of Chester was on my other hand and the conversation was kept up with great liveliness. I asked the Bishop whether he thought he should carry his bill against Sunday amusements through both houses. Burke said he believed it would go through

their House though his *pious friend* Wilkes opposed it with all his might."

At Mrs. Vesey's in 1784 when politics ran high she wrote—"I had a great deal of chat with Mr. Burke; and so lively, and so foolish, and so good humoured was he, and so like the agreeable Mr. Burke I once knew and admired that I soon forgot his malefactions, and how often I had been in a passion with him for some of his speeches."—In 1786, still not quite in good humour with him—"I was at a small party the other night, of which Mr. Burke was one. He appeared to be very low in health and spirits; he talked to me with a kindness which revived my old affection for him." Of his son she says, "Richard Burke is an amiable young man, but not an adequate substitute for such a father." Shortly afterwards at Mrs. Vesey's—"We had Mr. Burke in the evening. The vivacity of this wonderfully great man is much diminished; business and politics have impaired his agreeableness." Describing a friend of Mrs. Vesey's—"Such characters are what Mr. Burke calls the 'soft quiet green on which the soul loves to rest.'" In 1788—"Burke said to me the other day in allusion to the innumerable lives, anecdotes, remains, &c. which have been published of Johnson—"How many maggots have crawled out of that great body!"—"I was overpersuaded by Lord and Lady Amherst to go to the trial (Hastings's) and heard Burke's famous oration of three hours and a quarter without intermission. Such a splendid and powerful oration I never heard. * * * The recapitulation of the dreadful cruelties in India was worked up to the highest pitch of eloquence and passion, so that the orator was seized with a spasm which made him incapable of speaking another word. I think I never felt such indignation as when Burke, with Sheridan standing on one side of him and Fox on the other, said, 'Vice incapacitates a man from all public duty, it withers the powers of his understanding, and makes his mind paralytic?' I looked at his two neighbours, and saw that they were quite free from symptoms of palsy!"—In April 1790—"At Mrs. Montague's the other day I met Mr. Burke and a pleasant party; indeed he is a sufficiently pleasant party of himself."

One of the most flattering testimonies borne to the superiority of his public and private character and to his senatorial

and literary talents, appeared in 1787 in the celebrated Latin preface to Bellendenus by Dr. Parr; an offering certainly of no common value either in the terms in which it was expressed, or the quarter whence it came; a characteristic tribute of admiration from the most learned to the most eloquent man of the age. It was known that the Doctor had also written his epitaph. Alluding to Burke in conversation with a friend in 1814, he mentioned this inscription as being written with the whole force of his mind, with his choicest Latinity, and that it had cost him more effort than any thing else of similar length. Yet on showing it to a sagacious friend, the latter said, "it is very good, but there is no heart in it." "True," rejoined the Doctor, "I had no heart when I wrote it." The explanation is, that the doctor thought Mr. Burke had sinned so much against liberty when he attacked the French Revolution, that his warmer feelings towards him had become deadened or extinguished.

His own taste in epitaph or rather character-writing, was again put into requisition by the completion in August 1788, of the splendid and in this country unequalled mausoleum to the memory of the Marquis of Rockingham, erected about a mile in front of Wentworth House, Yorkshire, from which as well as from the surrounding country it forms a noble and interesting object. The interior of the base is a dome supported by twelve Doric columns, with niches for the statues of the deceased nobleman and his friends, among whom the distinguished writer of the following inscription now takes his stand. For force, precision, and fitness, it has perhaps, like the mausoleum itself, few equals among the mortuary remains of the country :

" CHARLES, MARQUIS OF ROCKINGHAM.

" A statesman in whom constancy, fidelity, sincerity, and directness were the sole instruments of his policy. His virtues were his arts. A clear, sound, unadulterated sense, not perplexed with intricate design, or disturbed by ungoverned passion, gave consistency, dignity, and effect to all his measures. In Opposition, he respected the principles of Government; in Administration, he provided for the liberties of the people. He employed his moments of power in realizing every thing which he had promised in a popular situation. This was the distinguishing mark of his conduct. After twenty-four years of service to the public, in a critical and trying time, he left no debt of just expectation unsatisfied.

" By his prudence and patience he brought together a party which it was the great object of his labours to render permanent, not as an instrument of ambition, but as a living depository of principle.

"The virtues of his public and private life were not in him of different characters. It was the same feeling, benevolent, liberal mind, that, in the internal relations of life, conciliates the unfeigned love of those who see men as they are, which made him an inflexible patriot. He was devoted to the cause of liberty, not because he was haughty and intractable, but because he was beneficent and humane.

"Let his successors, who from this house behold this monument, reflect that their conduct will make it their glory or their reproach. Let them be persuaded that similarity of manners, not proximity of blood, gives them an interest in this statue.

"Remember—Resemble—Persevere."

CHAPTER X.

Anecdote of Burke at Mr. Crewe's—Adventure with a poor Artist—Regency Question—Letter to Mr. Pitt—Letter to Mr. Montagu—French Revolution—Letters to M. Menonville—Letters from Edmund, the two Richards, and Mrs. Burke, to Mrs. French—Rupture with Mr. Sheridan—Correspondence with Mr. Mercer—Parliamentary Business—Mr. G. Hamilton.

DURING the period of the application to Parliament of the Prince of Wales for an increase of income in order to the liquidation of debts, Mr. Sheridan, who stood high in his confidence, commented in strong terms at the table of Mr. Crewe on the hardship of the case and the disinclination shown by Government to assist him; concluding with a kind of authoritative assertion that if not granted, His Royal Highness *must* discontinue the necessary repairs of Carlton House, and retire from the dignity of his station into the obscurity of private life.

Mr. Burke, who was present with several members of Opposition, observed in reply, that though none wished more heartily than himself that obstacles should not be thrown by Mr. Pitt in the way of an amicable accommodation, yet even were the application refused, he saw no satisfactory reason for adopting the threatened alternative. "Admitting," he continued, "that some inconveniences may be occasioned to His Royal Highness, yet on the whole it will be more wise to submit to them than to resort to retirement, which I and others may consider uncalled-for and ill-judged; and may

induce people to believe that there is in such a mode of proceeding more of petulance than necessity; while many will be induced to question whether dignity thus easily and voluntarily thrown aside may not in time be dispensed with altogether. Besides, *submission* is in itself a virtue, and ultimately will have its effect." Considerable discussion ensued upon the point. It was urged that it was better not to appear in public at all than to appear with diminished splendour; and at any rate the expenses of the public establishment alone would absorb the whole of his Royal Highness's income, leaving nothing for those private enjoyments which royalty as well as private men look to as the chief soothers and sweeteners of life. "Taking the question even on this shewing," replied Burke, "if we inquire very minutely, something may be found even for that purpose. But I must continue to think, that a Royal personage ought, in some cases, to make this among his other sacrifices. My idea is, Sir, (alluding to the paramount duty of supporting the royal dignity in preference to any private gratification) that we should *starve the man* in order to *fatten the prince*, rather than *starve the prince* in order to fatten the man."

"But after all," he continued, "there will be no necessity for this. I think I can make it out very satisfactorily. Let us trace the outline on paper." Paper was accordingly brought. "To a palace three things are indispensable—a chapel, a library, and a riding house, to provide for the wants of religion, of the understanding, and of the health of the body; but our views being economical, the chaplain must likewise perform the duty of librarian. Another point which I deem becoming, if not politically useful, is for His Royal Highness to give a dinner once a fortnight to all the leading members of Parliament, without distinction of party." He went on to state his ideas of a royal establishment on many other matters connected with public display; continuing the detail to the description and quality of the officers of the household, the number of servants, of horses, of carriages, (he limited the latter to two as sufficient for all useful purposes) the necessary annual repairs of the royal residence; proceeding through every other item of probable expense down to the most minute, showing an extraordinary acquaintance with the customary wants of a palace, though so little acquainted practically with its interior—a knowledge probably acquired

from the minute research necessary to perfect the details of the economical reform bill. The result of his calculation was, that after paying all state expenses upon a scale which the company present seemed to think sufficiently liberal, there would still be a residue of £10,000 which might be appropriated to private purposes. "I always knew Burke's capacity to comprehend great things," said Mr. Courtenay, who was present on the occasion, "but I was not so well aware that he had leisure enough to master the small."*

Of his desire to encourage and assist unfriended talent, or anything that bore the semblance of talent, another instance which occurred about this time should not be omitted.

Travelling from town toward Beaconsfield during the summer, he overtook on the road a person almost overcome with heat and fatigue, and whose habiliments having seen more than their due period of service, hinted that their owner found it inconvenient to provide any other mode of conveyance than what nature had given him. Mr. Burke believing he saw something of character in his countenance or in his answers when addressed, offered him (no uncommon thing to occasional travellers of not absolutely disreputable appearance) a ride in his carriage as far as their way lay together. The pedestrian proved to be a poor artist—or would-be artist; for having been brought up to another calling, he had but lately intruded into the regions of taste, and had met with an indifferent reception. Specimens of his abilities he carried with him. These the orator examined; and finding some germ of talent that might in time become respectable, though not at all great, he carried him to Beaconsfield for a few days, and then dismissed him with a little money and much good advice, "to study hard and work diligently, for those alone constituted the foundations of all excellence and success." This new acquaintance, however, having too good an opinion of himself to believe that so much work was necessary, or perhaps conceiving how much easier it was to live by the liberality of a patron than by mere industry, became troublesome in his applications for pecuniary assistance. This Mr. Burke plainly told him it was not in his power to give to any extent; but if determined to be industrious, he would by his influence among the chief artists in London take care to ensure him constant employment.

* Communicated by Lord Crewe to Mr. Haviland Burke.

He also wrote him two letters of advice—one of them I am informed very excellent—for though promised I have not yet seen it. A second now lies before me intimating some further aid, and marked by that practical good sense for the regulation of conduct in which he never seems to make a mistake. The poor man turned out so deficient in that quality as to be a believer in the “Prophet” Brothers.

During 1786-87-88 his private correspondence was not extensive. On the impeachment some earnest discussion took place with Mr. Dundas on the vote which deprived him of the aid of Mr. Francis as one of the managers. He asks for it pressing as a personal favour as well as in justice to the cause. “Be so good (little as I may be entitled to your and Mr. Pitt’s regard) to reflect on my condition, with a load upon my shoulders the weight of which few can conceive, and which no description can exaggerate.” The refusal threw all the additional labour previously assigned to Francis upon himself. A dispute likewise with one of his neighbours on boundary rights, produced some uneasiness, which however terminated in his favour by the verdict of a jury. And immediately afterwards as if to make amends for this unexpected annoyance or the difficulties created by it, came a very handsome gift—one of the most unmistakeable proofs of regard—from his old friend, Dr. Brocklesby, in a note from Norfolk-street, July 2nd, 1788—“My very dear friend,—My veneration of your public conduct for many years past, and my real affection for your private virtues and transcendent worth, made me yesterday take a liberty with you in a moment’s conversation at my house to make you an instant present of one thousand pounds, which for years past, by will, I had destined as a testimony of my regard on my decease.” And adds that he is “rich enough to spare to virtue what others waste in vice.” Burke did not reply for a fortnight, but then accepted it on the assurance that it did not trench on the claims of others, and that it might remain as a debt at the pleasure of the donor.

Toward the end of October 1788 the melancholy illness of the king withdrew public attention from all other subjects to the consequent proceedings in Parliament, in which Mr. Burke, who it might be thought had found enough to do in the complicated labours of the impeachment, was destined to take part. It is more than doubtful whether at the com-

mencement this was quite congenial to his wishes. But the absence from England at first, and subsequent illness of Mr. Fox, threw the labouring oar upon him; and a sense of party necessity, joined to the conviction of the Heir Apparent being treated with injustice by the Ministry, urged him to wield it with perhaps less than usual moderation of temper. Personal favour or aggrandizement he had no reason to expect. Above nine weeks of the emergency had elapsed when he pointedly declared in the House of Commons (22nd December)—and the omission was then well known in the political world though remedied soon afterward,—that he knew as little of the interior of Carlton House as he did of Buckingham House. This did not in the least abate the zeal of his exertions.

A minute detail of these labours, as they may be found in all publications whether of biography or history connected with this period, is not necessary to be given here. It may be sufficient to say they comprised nearly all that argument, wit, constitutional knowledge, and sarcastic ridicule, could urge; and were zealously continued in almost every debate on the subject for about two months. He contended for the *exclusive* right of the Prince of Wales to the Regency in opposition to Mr. Pitt, who maintained that any other person approved by Parliament had an equal right to it. He strenuously resisted the two chief resolutions moved by him,—that it was the express duty of the two houses to provide a Regency in case of interruption to the royal authority—and that they alone should determine on the means to give the royal assent to the bill constituting such a Regency. It appears, however, that in this difficult and delicate emergency he was less consulted than on previous occasions by the party, his views being somewhat different from theirs, and urged with more earnestness. He was not summoned to Carlton House till early in February 1789.

The bill itself introduced as it was with so many restrictions, he stigmatised as derogatory to the Prince, who was left to exercise all the invidious duties of government without its power to encourage or reward merit. He debated it clause by clause with unabated spirit till toward the end of February when the happy recovery of the Sovereign at length put an end to the bickerings and personalities on all sides produced by this contention. The usual and indeed

uncommon diligence with which he sought for information on all topics of interest may be conceived from what took place on this occasion. Besides ransacking our history for precedents or points of coincidence, he examined all the medical books treating of the disease, visited several receptacles for persons so afflicted in order more thoroughly to trace its general progress and results, and was in constant attendance during the examinations of the physicians. Neither was his pen less exercised upon this occasion than any other of his powers; and credit has been given to it though perhaps untruly, for a variety of short pieces published in the newspapers of the day. These however were inferior missiles compared with another production which from the quarter whence it nominally emanated, the important political sentiments it contained, the style in which they were conveyed, and the celebrity which the paper not only acquired at the moment but has ever since retained, claimed an importance which it was suspected could only be given to it by the same gifted penman.

On the 30th December 1788, Mr. Pitt addressed a letter to the Prince of Wales, specifying in detail the restrictions to be imposed upon him in the office of Regent. The reply, which necessarily would meet the public eye, required in its composition no ordinary share of skill, discretion, and sound constitutional knowledge; for while the Prince could not but express displeasure at the ungenerous suspicious insinuated against his future conduct, considerable reserve became necessary in touching upon every other part of the question, so as not to commit himself or his political friends with Parliament, with the public, with the Queen, or with his Majesty in case of his recovery. For the execution of this delicate duty the eyes of the party directly turned upon Burke. In his hands while it would be sure to acquire the requisite vigour, information, and address necessary for the occasion, the heat which occasionally attended him in debate was known to be wholly discarded from his compositions in the closet. This paper though little time was given him for deliberating on the matter, fully confirmed their anticipations. Indeed it is almost surprising how readily and completely he quits in a moment the warmth of the partizan for the dignity of the Prince; which combined with the known fact so recently proclaimed by himself of being little familiar with

the interior of Carlton House, have given birth to doubts whether he was really the author of the piece ; but of this fact the rough draught being found among his papers, there is now no question. A few trifling alterations said to be made in his outline of it were emphatically pronounced at the time to be *not for the better*.

The jealousy and displeasure instilled into the mind of the Queen toward her son were not among the least proofs of the sinister arts used upon this occasion. Of some of his Royal Highness's friends and advisers, particularly the heads of opposition, still worse opinions were formed. Mr. Burke about this time used to say that some pains had been more than once taken though without any provocation on his part, to cause him to stand ill with her Majesty ; in the first instance on occasion of the economical reform bill ; in the second by the impeachment of Hastings whom she thought well of and was believed to support ; in the third by the parliamentary proceedings on the present question. An instance of the paltry though perhaps not unsuccessful arts made use of at the former period to his disadvantage came to his knowledge soon after it occurred, and was mentioned in conversation with some familiar friends as an exemplification of a strong phrase of his own for which he had been sometimes taken to task, "the low pimping politics of a court." Her Majesty it seems had been accustomed to use a lemon every morning for purposes of the toilet, but immediately after the passing of the reform bill in 1782, found regularly half a lemon substituted for a whole one. Upon inquiring into the cause she was informed it arose from the operation of Mr. Burke's bill, which under the plea of economy was intended to diminish or to deprive her and those about her of all their little comforts and conveniencies. "And however contemptible the shafts," said he, "levelled in this and other similar methods, I found they were not without their venom."

In the abuse poured out upon him during the discussions on the Regency, it was said that he displayed a kind of indifference or indelicacy to the unhappy condition in which his Majesty was placed ; a charge which his general and indeed extreme humanity upon all occasions, and a fair interpretation of his expressions such as every debater solicits from his hearers, sufficiently refute. It is well known that

from a certain infirmity of temper he felt too warmly upon all public topics ; that he gave vent to his feelings too freely ; and committed upon this as upon other occasions in his life the fault of being too unreserved with the public at large, which as experience has frequently proved, treats those statesmen with the least consideration who exhibit towards it the real emotions they experience. Concealment and art though considered the vices of a high public character seem almost necessary to his position in order to enjoy the favour of those whom he serves. In debate Burke's warmth was sufficiently punished on this occasion by unjust insinuations in the House, by abundant abuse in the newspapers, and by cries of *order!* frequently repeated in debate.

Politicians militant commonly make the greatest excuses for each other ; and there were many apologies for his warmth in the undoubted and admitted manœuvring of Ministry which would have enabled them to jockey his friends out of the useful exercise of power had it been acquired. So likewise in the artful concealment of the design till the middle of December when it was ripe for execution ; in the means made use of to instil ungenerous suspicions of her children into the mind of the Queen ; in the anomalous principle of an elective regency in an hereditary monarchy ; in the fraud and fiction as he strongly termed it of making the Great Seal, a thing of wax and copper, a substitute for a King, when a living, lawful, intelligent heir was at hand ; in the number and nature of the restrictions imposed ; in the conflicting opinions of the physicians. No one understood the necessity for such allowances, or acted more fairly upon them than Mr. Pitt : for though keenly sensitive to the sarcasms of his opponent, particularly when taunted with being a *competitor* for the Regency with the Prince, and to which he replied by an ungenerous accusation that Mr. Burke did not wish the King to recover, the occasion had no sooner ceased than it was forgotten on the part of both ; both probably feeling that had their situations as to power been reversed, their conduct might not have materially differed.

The emergency to any Minister was new and difficult, but the characteristic dexterity of Mr. Pitt, and the democratical view which the preservation, or speedy resumption of power rendered it expedient for him to take, tickled the popular feeling into approval of all that he did. It was no more than natu-

ral that he should wish to retain the important station he then held; and it is equally certain that had he thought there was the most distant hope of retaining it under the Regent, the restrictions upon the latter would not have been imposed. Few of any party can possibly doubt this. The justice of the restrictions was therefore, to say the least, questionable; and cast a suspicion where no suspicion ought fairly to have fallen.

Whatever be the opinion of the Minister's public measures, or the purity of his motives, his private conduct was manly; too unceremonious perhaps, too lofty, too unbending towards the heir to the throne to be consistent with the deference due to his high station in the state, though he disclaimed the slightest intentional disrespect. The Chancellor displayed more art on this occasion and infinitely more pliancy. Rough and knotted in character only when his official existence was not in danger, he on this occasion exhibited more of the willow than the oak in his composition, oscillating between the contending interests with a degree of elasticity of which he was previously not thought capable, and which in the eyes of near observers did not tend to exalt his character. It is well known he was negotiating at Carlton House for the preservation of his office nearly up to the moment that the recovery of the king became probable. Mr. Burke necessarily aware of this, assailed him with several sarcasms, particularly on hearing of a burst of the pathetic accompanied by tears from him in the House of Lords, in allusion to the afflicting condition of his Majesty, when he said, "When I forget his Majesty's favours, may God forget me!" "The theatrical tears then shed," he said, "were not the tears of patriots for dying laws, but of Lords for their expiring places; the iron tears which flowed down Pluto's cheek rather resembled the dismal bubbling of the *Styx* than the gentle murmuring streams of *Aganippe*; in fact, they were tears for his Majesty's bread, and those who shed them would stick by the King's loaf as long as a single cut of it remained, while even a crust of it held together." During the progress of this business, the correspondence of Mr. Burke with Lord Charlemont, who took the lead in the Irish House of Lords and formed one of the deputation bearing its Address to the Prince, was frequent and confidential; he being indeed the main channel used for the com-

munication of public opinion of Ireland, between that nobleman and his Royal Highness. Of the latter, with whom he had now enjoyed several confidential interviews, he spoke highly in a letter to his Lordship of April 4th 1789.

Though most persons thought his exertions on this question sufficiently active, he did not seem to have the same opinion of them himself. "My time of life," said he, writing to the same nobleman, July 10th, on this and other matters, "the length of my service, and the temper of the public, rendered it very unfit for me to exert myself in the common routine of Opposition." Yet he had exerted himself on several topics in Parliament with great zeal, in addition to the unceasing slavery of the impeachment in Westminster Hall. With Mr. Fox, though without expressly naming him, he was evidently dissatisfied on the Regency question, and also with others of his coadjutors. Allusions to these and to continued ill success in the pursuit of public objects, occur in other passages of the same letter. He had lost some ground in general opinion by the tone of the late discussions on a delicate question. Warmth of temperament sometimes overpowered prudential considerations; and on two or three occasions he was interrupted for undue heat or severe invectives against the supporters of Ministry. His speeches on this subject were more than a dozen in number.

The trial of Mr. Hastings had with him however lost none of its interest; for the spirit of an animated apostrophe which he had addressed to a friend on meeting him in the street the day after the impeachment was first voted, in allusion to that and other public events of the moment, seemed still to actuate him. "What a proud day," he exclaimed, "for England!—What a glorious prospect!—Her justice extending to Asia—her humanity to Africa—her friendship to America—and her faith and good will to all Europe!" A bold though indirect attempt was now made to detach him from the pursuit of an object upon which so much talent and almost incredible labour and perseverance had already been expended. Having incidentally stated before the House of Lords that Mr. Hastings had murdered Nundcomar by the hands of Sir Elijah Impey, the former caused a petition to be presented to the Commons by his agent Major Scott, complaining of the words as irrelevant to the matter at issue, and calculated to prejudice him in the opinion of his judges.

Mr. Burke replied that they were not irrelevant; for in urging a charge of pecuniary corruption against the culprit, it was to be expected he would not let slip the opportunity of naming the agent by whom the bribe was conveyed (from Munny Begum) and the means by which such agent was afterwards got rid of when he had threatened to become an accuser. On the same subject he also addressed a long letter to Mr. Montague, who read it to the House.

Discussions on this matter took place in the Commons on the 27th and 30th of April, and 1st and 4th of May, when on the latter day the Marquis of Graham moved that the words complained of "ought not to have been spoken," which was carried by a considerable majority. Mr. Bouverie immediately moved, "That the thanks of this House be given to the right honourable Edmund Burke and the rest of the managers for their exertions and assiduity in the prosecution of the impeachment against Warren Hastings, Esq., and that they be desired to persevere in the same." This being objected to by the Master of the Rolls as premature, the previous question was moved by him and carried. The result of these votes gave offence to the committee of managers. Two several meetings were held, one the same evening, the other the following morning, to consider of the propriety of surrendering at once a laborious duty in the performance of which they were thus coldly supported; but after some discussion it was resolved to proceed. To this result Mr. Burke, as may be supposed, mainly contributed. From the first presentation of Mr. Hastings's petition, countenanced as it obviously was by Ministry, he entertained suspicion of a design indirectly to interrupt or wholly get rid of a proceeding never agreeable, as he was well aware, to the highest authority in the kingdom, by exciting disgust in the minds of those appointed to carry it on. This and other stratagems, as had been foreseen by himself years before, he determined should not take effect with him; and to intimate his resolution more generally that nothing short of a formal vote of the House to remove him should slacken his exertions, the letter to Mr. Montague had been written.

He took credit for perseverance on this occasion. Alluding to it two years afterward in conversation with Sir Joshua Reynolds and Wilkes, he said, "the most brilliant day of my life, and that which I would most wish to live over

again, was the day I appeared at the bar of the House of Lords with the censure of the Commons in my hand. I had but an hour to prepare myself; the resolution of the other managers to proceed in the business having only just been taken. Mr. Fox strongly urged me to relinquish the prosecution at that time—Mr. Pitt as anxiously hoped I should; but had there been no higher motive, no moral principle at work to induce me to persevere, the disgrace of such a retreat on account of such a provocation and the weakness of mind it would have indicated, must have proved fatal to any public character."

Mr. Sheridan, as may be supposed from his more careless habits was occasionally remiss in attendance upon the meetings of the managers; and a note from Burke to his lady is extant as a refresher to his memory on one of these occasions. Another, addressed to himself, iterates something of the same design of pushing forward his idler colleague to the assiduous performance of an important public duty, as there is direct allusion to some breach of previous engagement.

"You have only to wish to be excused to succeed in your wishes; for indeed he must be a great enemy to himself who can consent, on account of a momentary ill-humour, to keep himself at a distance from you.

"Well, all will turn out right,—and half of you, or a quarter, is worth five other men. I think that this cause, which was originally yours, will be recognized by you, and that you will again possess yourself of it. The owner's mark is on it, and all our docking and cropping cannot hinder its being known and cherished by its original master. My most humble respects to Mrs. Sheridan. I am happy to find that she takes in good part the liberty I presumed to take with her. Grey has done much, and will do everything. It is a pity that he is not always toned to the full extent of his talents.

"I feel a little sickish at the approaching day. I have read much—too much perhaps—and in truth am but poorly prepared. Many things too have broken in upon me."

Great as the offences of Hastings appeared to inquiring public men, incessant pains had been taken to represent him the victim of whim, or personal resentment, or mistake, or persecution, or anything else that suited the immediate purpose of his agents. These representations had extensive

effect among the less informed class of politicians, more especially of the softer and more sensitive sex ; so that Burke sometimes found himself in indifferent odour with a few former very staunch admirers. Even Miss Burney could not view her friend as before. Windsor opinions had thrown a halo of innocence around the alleged culprit ; and now installed in the domestic retinue of the Queen, how was it possible for her not to take the hue or fashion of the place ? She attended the opening of the trial and describes her impressions :—"I shuddered and drew involuntarily back, when as the doors were flung open, I saw Mr. Burke as head of the Committee, make his solemn entry. He held a scroll in his hand and walked alone, his brow knit with corroding care and deep labouring thought—a brow how different to that which had proved so alluring to my warmest admiration when first I met him !—So highly as he had been my favourite, so captivating as I had found his manners and conversation in our first acquaintance, and so much as I had owed to his zeal and kindness to me and my affairs in their progress ! How did I grieve to behold him now the cruel persecutor—such to me he appeared—of an injured and innocent man !"

She was present on the second day of his address—"All I had heard of his eloquence, and all I had conceived of his great abilities was more than answered by his performance. Nervous, clear, and striking was almost all that he uttered. * * * When he narrated, he was easy, flowing, and natural ; when he declaimed, energetic, warm, and brilliant. The sentiments he interspersed were as nobly conceived as they were highly coloured ; his satire had a poignancy of wit that made it as entertaining as it was penetrating ; his allusions and quotations apt and ingenious." But adds that he was discursive and fanciful, though no miscellaneous hearer could venture to find fault. On the third attendance, Mr. Windham told her—"And Burke—you should have heard the conclusion of Burke's speech ; 'twas the noblest ever uttered by man"—"So I have been told."—She compares him at this time with another great orator to the disadvantage of the latter ; and we must take the judgment of a lady as good evidence in regard to oratorical manner. "Mr. Fox spoke five hours, and with a violence that did not make one forget what I had heard of his being in a fury. I shall only say a

word of the speakers as far as relates to my own feelings * * * I adhere to Mr. Burke, whose oratorical powers appeared to me far more gentlemanlike, scholarlike, and fraught with true genius than those of Mr. Fox." Subsequently she adds that Burke's violence might be excused as no one could doubt his being in earnest; but Fox's violence seemed to be put on for the occasion.

After the Regency question she could not as may be supposed from her associations look upon him with much favour; sometimes turning away in dislike; sometimes confessing to a burst of the old feeling of admiration. A day in Westminster Hall in 1790 is spoken of as heavy—"Mr. Anstruther weighing it down; and Mr. Burke speaking from time to time and lighting it up. O were his purpose worthy of his talents what an effect would his oratory produce!" Looking at him in the Manager's box we have the exclamation from her—"Poor Mr. Burke!—so near to being wholly right, while yet wholly wrong!" And noticing Mr. Windham's regard says—"His affection for him seems to amount to fondness. This is not for me to wonder at. Who was so captivated as myself by that extraordinary man till he would no longer suffer me to reverence the talents I must still even admire?" The distaste of the ladies to their former love had become infectious. Hastings and the Regency had alienated even Mrs. Montagu. But, if we look forward from this, and anticipate time by a year when he had set Europe in agitation by his work on the French Revolution, it will be found that they eventually returned to their allegiance to this great captivator of men and women; and could even doubt whether he who seemed so inconsistent or mistaken in parts, was not right upon the whole.

A measure now in active progress not less dear to his reason than his feelings was the abolition of the slave trade, for which was pronounced (May 12th) an animated and argumentative appeal. "He thought the House, the nation, and all Europe under very great and serious obligations to the honourable gentleman (Mr. Wilberforce) for having brought the subject forward in a manner the most masterly, impressive, and eloquent. A trade begun with savage war, prosecuted with unheard-of-cruelty, continued during the mid-passage with the most loathsome imprisonment, and ending in perpetual exile and unremitted slavery, was a trade so horrid in all its

circumstances that it was impossible a single satisfactory argument could be adduced in its favour."

To this subject it will be remembered he had directed his mind, when the sufferings of the Negro commanded little attention elsewhere; and now that public sympathy was roused, a man of his sensitive temperament would not fail to be in the first rank of abolitionists. With its leading champion in Parliament, he was on friendly, though not perhaps very intimate terms. Opposed in political attachments, occasional assaults in the war of words came from either; but this occasioned no coolness, and he readily accepted Wilberforce's invitations to those quiet dinners given to his friends during the Session. About this time the latter writes in his Diary—"Burke, Sir G. Elliot, Sir Andrew St. John dined with me. First not in spirits, but yet a great man." He recurs to the subject of his intercourse with him on several occasions. "I had peculiar pleasure in his dinners with me as an evidence of our perfect harmony. He was a great man.—I never could understand how he grew to be at one time so neglected. In part undoubtedly it was, that like Mackintosh afterwards he was above his audience. He had come late into Parliament, and had had time to lay in vast stores of knowledge. The field from which he drew his treasures was magnificent. Like the fabled object of the fairy's favours, whenever he opened his mouth pearls and diamonds dropped from him."

The criminal laws became another subject for the exertion of his humane spirit (May 28th on a bill for encouraging the growth of roots, trees, and shrubs) censuring their number and severity; asserting the whole system to be radically defective and derogatory to a civilized country. Yet undue punishments were still attempted to be multiplied—a course of legislation he had always opposed, and should continue to oppose. A revision of the whole criminal code was necessary, for in its present state it was abominable. In pointing out the necessity for a revision of those laws as wholly disproportioned in severity of punishment to the offences committed, he was accustomed to tell a story indicative of the indifference with which vindictive enactments were frequently permitted to pass through Parliament. On an evening when an important discussion was expected to come

on in the House of Commons he entered the smoking-room which contained many members not usually in attendance, and on inquiring of one who looked disappointed as to their presence, received for answer—"Have you not heard then? The great debate is put off;—and I left them doing nothing but voting a few capital felonies." On this subject as on many others, he was in advance of his time; and we can now look back with satisfaction to his opinions which have had their influence on others, and thus corrected the sanguinary spirit of our code. He alluded to it in private society even more frequently than in public.

On the question of the choice of a Speaker (June 8th) he supported his friend Sir Gilbert Elliot against the Minister's friend (Mr. Addington,) and in contrast to some depreciatory remarks of Mr. Pitt, claimed a merit which has never been denied him. "Whatever faults he (Mr. Burke) might have, he never had attempted to lower rising talents in public esteem. On the contrary, if he ever had any merit, it was in hailing those superior talents whenever he had discovered them. The blossoming abilities of young members always afforded him the highest satisfaction, because it struck him as a renovation of the stock of public talent, and a pleasing earnest of the preservation of the constitution." These, with some discussions respecting libels on the House, published in the paper called the "World," and several matters of less importance, formed his chief exertions in Parliament until its rising.

At the close of this Session, a period of parliamentary as well as of general tranquillity seemed at hand. No object of prominent interest was before the public. The contest about the Regency had been set at rest by the recovery of the King. The impeachment, however fresh in the minds of its conductors, had lost much of its hold on public curiosity. He felt unwell; and several acquaintance beside Mr. Wilberforce observed him to be unusually depressed. Something of this feeling appears in the conclusion of his letter to Lord Charlemont, July 10, 1789, already quoted—"As to the politics of Ireland as I see nothing in them very pleasant, I do not wish to revive in your mind what your best

philosophy is required to make tolerable. Enjoy your Marino* and your amiable and excellent family. These are comfortable sanctuaries where more extensive views of society are gloomy, and unpleasant, and unsafe." Ill success in many of his labours had no doubt fostered this spirit of despondency; and a period of apparent political inaction seemed at hand which however agreeable to enjoy for a time, was really alien to a temperament and habits always of the most active description. But a week had not elapsed after this letter was written, when the storming of the Bastille in Paris, the defection of the army, the lawless massacres of the mob, the flight of many of the nobility and part of the royal family, and the entire dissolution of the powers of government, seemed the consummation by open outrage of the moral disorders which for two or three years had pervaded a neighbouring kingdom.

France, in the eyes of an Englishman, had for centuries presented a striking contrast to his own country, especially in one conspicuous and leading point. Long her equal in science, in the arts, in letters, in war, abounding in men of great genius and attainments as well as in correct and extended views, and pre-eminent in all the amenities of polished life, she was yet but a savage in the appreciation of freedom. She had acquired all things but that alone which is the most valuable of all, and which most ennobles man in his own opinion. The light of liberty was the only light which had not shone upon her. The spirit to acquire national freedom was the only spirit in which she had shown herself deficient. Little desirous of amending old despotic institutions, she had continued quietly to submit to them for nearly two centuries after England had thrown the greater part completely off; as if example in this most contagious of all feelings and occurring even at her doors, was fated to raise neither imitation nor sympathy. A portion of this indifference arose from her overweening vanity. Conceited beyond most nations, she despised whatever was not her own; and wrapped up in the splendours of military glory and absolute monarchy, she not only could not understand the advantage of our more popular form of government, but

* A beautiful villa near Dublin, commanding the whole sweep of the bay, and much of the surrounding country.

deemed it inefficient to her favourite purposes of war and aggrandisement. With characteristic self-complacency, some of her statesmen and all her courtiers, pronounced it suited only to a people whose national spirit and manners they were pleased to say partook largely of barbarism. Occasional consciousness of political degradation had indeed been exhibited by many of her eminent men during the preceding fifty years, but it was partial and soon forgotten. The wheels of government continued to roll on, clogged indeed by the obstructions which an absolute monarchy has a natural tendency to engender, and might still have continued to move, however slowly, had not financial difficulties soon after the close of the American war, precipitated an event for which the government of the country was wholly unprepared.

To remedy these deficiencies and to restore public credit, a selection from the higher order of each class of persons in the kingdom was at length assembled, followed by the convocation of her ancient legislature, the "States General," when by very ordinary efforts of honesty and good sense, France might have acquired all that could be desired in the way of freedom. But the mass of her people were ignorant; the nobility and clergy bigoted to invidious privileges and exemptions; the ties of religion loosened in the higher and middling classes by an extensive conspiracy of Atheists and Deists; the state of morals among the same classes, licentious; and when the moment of difficulty came, the King—himself a Lot in the midst of Gomorrah—was compelled to encounter a most alarming emergency surrounded by few good and by still fewer wise men.

The scenes that ensued cannot here be retraced. They are painful to contemplate, and two or three centuries hence will scarcely be believed. But the deliberative body, presented the most fearful as well as the most curious spectacle of all. It is difficult even now to tell whether knavery or folly predominated most in its proceedings. There were in it no doubt, some clever, and many good men; but they were far outnumbered by the designing, the unprincipled, the needy, the ignorant; by dreamers and speculative philosophers unacquainted with the first elements of political science, who in attempting to carry their fanciful reveries into effect, might be said to have converted anarchy into a system.

They took a constitution in hand as a savage would a look-

ing-glass, or a Chinese puzzle, which required to be shaken to pieces in order to discover the charm within. All the balances of the State were overturned, the rights of property infringed, distinctions as old as the foundation of the kingdom abrogated. No attempt was made to retain such shattered elements of the State as were in themselves good—no wise design as Lord Bacon expresses it, to weed, to prune, and to graft, rather than to plough up and plant all afresh—but a seeming desire to drag up institutions by the roots, to enjoy a species of moral chaos, to revel in the luxury of inextricable confusion ; and so generally was this spirit diffused that many of the nobility and gentry whose interests and even existence were at stake by the schemes in agitation, became the most forward instruments of their own destruction ; some from love of popularity, but the majority from utter want of foresight as to consequences. Among the members of the Assembly, might be seen soon after its formation that theoretical perfection of representation so much admired by certain politicians practically put to the test. Every class of society almost to the offal, was ransacked for deputies. The fruits were such as might be expected ; men without wisdom, without dignity, without property, without experience or consistency of conduct ; whose meetings had little of the character of deliberation, and whose deeds as the revolution proceeded, would but for their atrocity, have been as laughable for folly, as they were defective in judicious and honest qualities.

A curious inquirer might trace among certain of its members who worked their way by follies or crimes into the service of the State during the confusion, a strange aversion toward their former condition or attachments. Noblemen were to be seen denouncing the order of nobility ; ministers of a despotic monarchy calling for a republic ; courtiers denying the royal authority ; priests voting religion an incumbrance ; lawyers overturning all semblance of law or justice ; philosophers admitting of no argument but the guillotine ; poets chanting the necessity for blood ; painters, coolly catching the finishing touches of their art in the dying struggles of the scaffold ; for all these facts literally occurred. Below them, and still more active in the work of revolutionary regeneration, were tradesmen—butchers,

brewers, bakers and others—busily occupied in thinning by the guillotine the mouths they had contributed to feed; and school-masters, musicians, players, dancing-masters, exterminating those orders of society who had previously formed their chief or only means of support.

The people at large were not unworthy of such representatives. Paris and much of the country, became transformed into a den of uncaged maniacs, acting the most wild, and horrible extravagances such as no country barbarous or civilized ever before offered; equal even to the murderous amusements of Ashantee. Were not the facts notorious, it would be difficult to believe that human nature had been so desperately wicked. The rights of man, ostentatiously proclaimed, were every day atrociously violated; religion defamed and abolished, to make way for the goddess of reason; morality derided; public massacres sanctioned; anarchy legalized; quarter to English prisoners of war disallowed by the public vote of the Deputies of the nation; proscription and bloodshed decreed to be the duty, almost the recreation of ruffians in power; even the dead torn from their graves to undergo revolting indignities. All the ties that bind men together seemed to be dissolved. Obligations had little power to conciliate, or gratitude to bind the dependent to his benefactor; brother turned from brother, the son almost from his father wherever there appeared hesitation in dooming to destruction all who possessed wealth, rank, or principle. For about five years Europe gazed with affright and astonishment at this spectacle, which embodying the barbarities of the most ferocious of mankind within the compass of a single state, rendered its government or rather its tyrants detestable, its people infamous, and liberty thus abused the direst of all curses.

In England, the first movements of the Revolution were hailed as the political deliverance of the French nation. Mr. Fox, Mr. Pitt, and others of eminence, tendered it their tribute of admiration. Mr. Burke alone was more cautious or more penetrating. He professed to admire the principle as much as any one; but either from that uncommon sagacity he had ever displayed on great national questions, from greater age and experience in life, from better knowledge of mankind or of French character, he entertained from the first remarkable misgivings as to its operation and results.

Few things in political history are more interesting than to trace the first symptoms of this hesitation to approve, what all other and even great men thought it almost their duty instantly and by acclamation, to admire. Among his first sentiments on this topic communicated to correspondents, if not the very first, was a letter to Lord Charlemont, dated 9th of August, 1789, about three weeks after the storming of the Bastille, in which he opens his mind without reserve:—

“As to us here, our thoughts of every thing at home are suspended by our astonishment at the wonderful spectacle which is exhibited in a neighbouring and rival country. What spectators, and what actors? England gazing with astonishment at a French struggle for liberty, and not knowing whether to blame or to applaud. The thing, indeed, though I thought I saw something like it in progress for several years, has still somewhat in it paradoxical and mysterious. The spirit it is impossible not to admire; but the old Parisian ferocity has broken out in a shocking manner. It is true, that this may be no more than a sudden explosion; if so, no indication can be taken from it; but if it should be *character*, rather than accident, then that people are not fit for liberty, and must have a strong hand, like that of their former masters, to coerce them. Men must have a certain fund of natural moderation to qualify them for freedom, else it becomes noxious to themselves, and a perfect nuisance to every body else. What will be the event, it is hard, I think, still to say. To form a solid constitution requires wisdom as well as spirit; and whether the French have wise heads among them, or if they possess such, whether they have authority equal to their wisdom, is yet to be seen. In the mean time, the progress of this whole affair is one of the most curious matters of speculation that ever was exhibited.”

Nothing can be more unambiguous and unreserved, or more consistent with the active part he afterwards took, than this avowal made in the confidence of friendship—that the spirit to aim at liberty was praiseworthy, but that ultimate approval by wise and good men must depend upon the manner in which that desire should be carried into effect. The apprehensions which overshadowed his mind are obvious in this letter, and similar sentiments were communicated,

both verbally and in writing to other friends. His judgment might be said without a figure to be suspended over it like the sword of Damocles, and with almost equal power to destroy.

In the mean time with accustomed diligence, no means were left untried of procuring information, desiring all his acquaintance in Paris to transmit him whatever they could collect of private or public documents on either side. Among his correspondents beside one or two advocates of note and other natives of distinction of the reasonable class of well-wishers to freedom, were others, chiefly foreigners, of a different stamp; such as Christie, the noted Thomas Paine, and the equally notorious Baron (otherwise Anacharsis) Clootz; the two latter more especially, who in principle the very fanatics of revolutionary republicanism, were at this moment fated to supply unintentionally on their part, some of the materials which Mr. Burke, with equal speed and dexterity, sharpened into its most powerful antidotes. To another correspondent, M. de Menonville, a relation of the Baron de Menou and a member of the National Assembly, who requested his opinion of their affairs towards the end of September 1789, he wrote early in the following month, plainly exhibiting the gradual development of his opinions and apprehensions, as events took a more decided turn.*

“As you are pleased to think, that your splendid flame of liberty was first lighted up at my faint and glimmering taper, you have a right to call upon me for my sentiments on whatever relates to that subject * * You may easily believe, that I have had my eyes turned with great curiosity, and no small concernment, to the astonishing scene now displayed in France. It has certainly given rise in my mind to many reflections, and to some emotions. These are natural and unavoidable; but it would ill become me to be too ready in forming a positive opinion upon matters transacted in a country, with the correct political map of

* Some portion of this communication but with several variations, appears in a letter addressed to M. Dupont, a man of talents and connexions who had visited him at Beaconsfield a year or two before, and is published in the correspondence. But as it is longer and more elaborate, we may consider it an improved version of hints first thrown out here to another.

which I must be very imperfectly acquainted. Things, indeed, have already happened so much beyond the scope of all speculation, that persons of infinitely more sagacity than I have, ought to be ashamed of any thing like confidence in reasoning upon the operation of any principle, or the effect of any measure. It would become me least of all to be so confident, who ought at my time of life to have well learned the important lesson of self-distrust—a lesson of no small value in company with the best information—but which alone can make any sort of amends for our not having learned other lessons so well as it was our business to learn them. * * You hope, Sir, that I think the French deserving of liberty. I certainly do. I certainly think that all men who desire it, deserve it. It is not the reward of our merit, or the acquisition of our industry. It is our inheritance. It is the birth-right of our species. We cannot forfeit our right to it, but by what forfeits our title to the privileges of our kind, *I mean the abuse or oblivion of our national faculties ; and a ferocious indocility, which makes us prompt to wrong and violence, destroys our social nature, and transforms us into something little better than a description of wild beasts.* To men so degraded, a state of strong restraint is a sort of necessary substitute for freedom ; since, bad as it is, it may deliver them in some measure from the worst of all slavery, that is, the despotism of their own blind and brutal passions. You have kindly said that you began to love freedom from your intercourse with me. Permit me then to continue our conversation, and to tell you what the freedom is that I love. It is not solitary, unconnected, individual, selfish liberty. It is social freedom. *It is that state of things in which the liberty of no man, and no body of men, is in a condition to trespass on the liberty of any person, or any description of persons in society."*

In a second communication to the same correspondent, he says—" With regard to the state of things in France, I am afraid that as matters appear to me at present, I cannot at all agree with you, until at least my information is as good as your's. I hope you do not think me weak enough to form my opinion of what is doing there from the representations in newspapers, much less upon those of the newspapers of a country in which the true spirit of the several transactions cannot be generally known. As for me, I

have read, and with some attention, the authorized or rather equally authentic documents on this subject; from the first instructions to the representatives of the several orders, down to this time. What else I have read has been for the greater part on the side of those who have a considerable share in the formation and conduct of public measures. A great many of the most decisive events I conceive, are not disputed as facts though as usual there is some dispute about their causes and their tendencies. On comparing the whole of fact, of public document, and of what can be discerned of the general temper of the French people, I perfectly agree with you, that there is very little likelihood of the old government's regaining its former authority. Were the king to escape from his palace where he is now in reality a prisoner with his wife and almost his whole family, to what place could he fly? Every town in France is a Paris. I see no way by which a second revolution can be accomplished. The only chance seems to consist in the extreme instability of every species of power and the uncertainty of every kind of speculation."

At the time this was written, few indeed could agree in opinion with the sagacious writer, of the evils attendant on the Revolution. Yet after every allowance for the generous feelings of the moment in favour of a phantom which bore some resemblance to freedom, all considerate men must have been convinced, that the utter subversion of every institution long established in a State, can never under any circumstances be justifiable or wise. Even material changes in the supreme authority, though perhaps sometimes necessary, are always dangerous. They must not be adopted but in the last extremity, and then managed only by the most delicate and experienced hands. Earthquakes and hurricanes possibly produce good, but few considerate men like to be within the sphere of their operation. It is just so with revolutions. The good is often problematical. The way to it at least is through confusion and evil, a quagmire of moral instability—of over-turned laws, property, and connexions—in which wantonly to throw down every ancient land-mark, is wilfully to wander out of the road, to sink deeper as we proceed, and to plunge into difficulties which destroy every hope of attaining the destination in view. Such however was the effect of example that persons in England disregarding the bles-

sings of the practical freedom they enjoyed, professed not only to admire the speculative reveries of France, but the wish to put some of the principal of them into practice. The delusion was widely spread and deeply rooted,—more general, than it is now easy or agreeable to believe; nor did it with a few even of our greatest men speedily pass away.

A domestic affliction, about this time, detached his mind for a moment from contemplating public evils, to experience personally unfeigned private sorrow—a more vulnerable point of suffering, as even the most patriotic spirit must confess, to all men. This was the death of his sister, Mrs. French. A variety of private circumstances had tended to keep up little more than an epistolary communication during life, yet still with a hope fondly entertained by both, of spending the evening of their lives nearer to each other. Several letters addressed to her by members of Edmund's family may hereafter appear.

Previously to the meeting of Parliament in 1790, the proceedings of the National Assembly of France seeming to rise in estimation in this country, drew from Mr. Burke, severe condemnation of the popular feeling; terming it “a gross infatuation,” “a tolerance of crime,” “an absurd partiality to abstract follies and practical wickedness.” Every arrival from France seemed more than to realize his worst anticipations. When informed of the opinions of Mr. Fox, with whom there had been some cessation of confidential intercourse for three years past, being opposed to his own, he expressed surprise and on one occasion said, “Fox has too much good nature not to like any thing that promises benefit to his fellow-men; but in this matter, his judgment must soon correct the errors of his disposition.” Further information made him less sanguine in this hope respecting his friend; and the fear of open and direct disagreement induced him to resolve not voluntarily to obtrude his sentiments on the question to Parliament,—not at least until compelled so to do by a sense of duty paramount to all private considerations. Such an occasion very soon called him forth.

In two debates on the army estimates (5th and 9th of February, 1790,) Mr. Fox not only eulogized the Revolution in France generally, but was imprudent enough to specify some points of particular admiration—among others the **total defection of the French military from their officers and**

government. Colonel Phipps, as a military man, and other members, reprobated these sentiments loudly as subversive of discipline and subordination. Mr. Burke, on the second occasion (9th February), expressing the highest admiration of the talents of his hon. friend, and the danger to our own country of giving the sanction of his name to such doctrines; entered into an examination of the state of France, the principles, proceedings, and tendencies of the Revolution; condemning in bitter terms the incurable ignorance of the leaders, their folly, injustice, and wickedness, their pedantic theories, their abuse of elementary principles, and contrasted it with the English Revolution, to which he could not find a point of resemblance. In England, nothing had been changed but what absolute necessity required. In France on the contrary, nothing whatever, not even the most necessary or praiseworthy institution was preserved. He hated the old despotism of France, and still more he hated the new. It was a plundering, ferocious, bloody, tyrannical democracy, without a single virtue to redeem its numerous crimes; and so far from being as his hon. friend had inadvertently said worthy of imitation, he would spend his last breath and the last drop of his blood—he would quit his best friends and join his worst enemies, to oppose the least tittle of such a spirit, or such an example, in England.

This speech which contained no compliment to administration, but rather an adverse spirit, was nevertheless received by the members of that body and by a great majority of the House with great applause. Mr. Pitt was among the most conspicuous. He had been generously but incautiously led to express some opinion in favour of the struggle then going on; but alarmed at its progress and aspect, he now appeared to wheel round to concur in the sentiments of Mr. Burke. No matter he said, how they had differed on former points of policy; he felt for him on that occasion the highest gratitude and reverence; and not only the present generation but the latest posterity would revere his name for the decided part he had that day taken.

The reply of Mr. Fox was mild and conciliatory. He had ever, and did then, entertain the highest veneration for the judgment of his hon. friend. By him he had been instructed more than by all other men and books put together. By him he had been taught to love our constitution; from him he

had acquired nearly all his political knowledge; all certainly which was most essential, and which he most valued. "His speech on that day, some arguments and observations excepted, was one of the wisest and most brilliant flights of oratory ever delivered in that House," but with all these admissions his opinions on the subject in question continued unshaken. A rejoinder from Mr. Burke expressed an equally complimentary and conciliatory spirit; and the subject, tender as it evidently was, would have dropped at least for the present without further consequences, had not the zeal of Mr. Sheridan in support of the new opinions, urged him to charge his political associate as a deserter from his former principles—an assailant of the basis of freedom itself—the advocate and apologist of despotism—the libeller of men struggling in the most glorious of all causes. The reply to these unmeasured censures, mingled indeed with some straggling compliments, was calm but decided. Such terms, Mr. Burke said, might have been spared, if for nothing more than as a sacrifice to the ghost of departed friendship. They were but a repetition of what was said by the reforming clubs and societies with which the hon. gentleman had lately become entangled, and for whose applause he had chosen to sacrifice his friend; though he might in time find that the value of such praise was not worth the price at which it was purchased. Henceforward, he added, they were separated in politics for ever.

This schism threatened such consequences to the interests of the party, that attempts were instantly made and repeated two days afterwards, to heal it by explanations in presence of the Duke of Portland, Mr. Fox, and others of the chief members at Burlington House. They met at ten o'clock at night and debated the matter until three next morning, separating as they met, with irreconcilable differences of opinion. The display of talent on both sides is said to have been remarkable. Mr. Burke preserved his temper unruffled, expressing amicable sentiments towards the advocate, but abhorrence of the cause he maintained; and the impression as to services, powers, and opinions, proved so much in his favour upon the minds of those present, that Mr. Sheridan took offence, and for the remainder of this session and the beginning of the next, ceased from his usual active support in Parliament.

Some personal dislike prevailed between these distinguished men ever afterwards, nor were they perhaps very cordial for some time before. Mr. Burke who always complimented his talents, did not for many reasons place equal confidence in his general conduct or principles; one reason for which was his alleged breach of political faith in intriguing for one of the highest cabinet situations in the new arrangements consequent on the settling of the Regency, to the exclusion of senior and higher claimants. It has been supposed also, that he was the cause of Mr. Fox withdrawing from him some political confidence; and there were, it is said, other private sources of disagreement. The wit, as he rose high in the private favour of an illustrious personage, and in weight with his party, felt some impatience of the preponderance of Mr. Burke; for he possessed none of the humility of the latter in the estimate of his own importance. With little of steady talent or qualification for office, he had more than his ambition; and forgetful of the disciplined subordination of the old Whig school, aimed at vaulting to the head of that connexion over superior talents and longer services, though without private character, without serious hold on public confidence, and as was believed, without the diligence or punctuality necessary to conduct public business. After their disagreement, it was remarked, that he always sat silent in private company when Mr. Burke was a theme of praise with every one else. In Parliament he spoke of him more than once, "as one for whose talents and personal virtue he entertained the highest esteem, veneration and regard;" a compliment which did not prevent him making pointed and personal attacks on the object of it, but which Mr. Burke rarely deigned to regard. To his councils also, it has been said, that the subsequent quarrel of the former with Mr. Fox was in some degree owing.

The zealous friends of Sheridan, blind to the violence of the political storm then in progress in France, and deeming perhaps that no public question whatever should be permitted to interfere with private connexion, began to tax their ingenuity for the cause of this unexpected disclaimer by Burke, and discovered at length that it must be *jealousy* of his talents and influence. Among others Dr. Parr, though an ardent admirer of Burke, was too staunch a Whig and Foxite to see his former pupil Sheridan thus unceremo-

niously thrown off without administering to the self-love of his friends by assigning some such cause. He wrote thus immediately after the quarrel. "It is not merely French politics that produced this dispute;—they might have been settled privately. No, no—there is jealousy lurking underneath—jealousy of Mr. Sheridan's eloquence;—jealousy of his popularity;—jealousy of his influence with Mr. Fox;—jealousy perhaps of his connexion with the Prince."—Suggestions of this nature are easily made, and preclude a specific reply. In the present instance the accusation was scarcely plausible. It is true as has been already said, that Mr. Burke believed he had sufficient reasons for disliking the conduct of Sheridan, particularly since the agitation of the Regency question. But it should likewise be stated that Mr. Fox participated fully in the same feelings; and though they were not so openly exhibited by him in the first instance, and afterwards by the exigencies of politics were sometimes shrouded altogether, they did not the less cease to influence the mind of that statesman, as is known to his friends, even to the end of his life. Mr. Burke therefore, if actuated by displeasure towards the wit, did not stand alone in that feeling. The ostensible leader of the party joined him in it. As to jealousy in the common sense of the term, it was so wholly improbable that no one who understood their relative merits either in political science or in private character, would venture to place them in comparison. It is rarely that the greater man condescends to envy the less; and during the whole of his career, nothing of this kind can be adduced against Burke who exhibited on many occasions a wholly contrary spirit. In fact the biographer of Sheridan, who discloses in his own private journal what he suppresses in the published life, expressly tells us—"But it was Burke chiefly that Sheridan envied and hated * * * On Hastings' trial particularly it went to Sheridan's heart to see Burke in the place set apart for privy councillors, and himself excluded."* The same authority tells us he equally envied Fox.

To dwell upon the failings of the eminent is never a pleasing employment,—nor should a breath of this kind go forth against Sheridan here, except for this charge, which

* *Memoirs, &c. of Thomas Moore, by Lord John Russell, vol. ii. p. 18*

when alive he was willing to countenance ; and now, when vanity can no longer be gratified by the tale, is sometimes repeated. If any further ground be required for the disunion with Burke, let it be sought where perhaps it will be most certainly found, in the totally dissimilar characters of the men. Their minds had been cast in a wholly different mould. Their habits of life were as diametrically opposed. Nothing but the emergencies of politics could have kept such persons for twelve months together united by any tie resembling esteem or sincere friendship, when it is considered that one was religious, moral, temperate, principled, benevolent, laborious in public business, active and diligent in his private duties. The other so remarkably deficient in these and other virtues calculated to fix solid esteem,* that his biographer has been able to produce few instances of either. If it be further added, that one was conscientious and punctual in the discharge of his obligations to society, the other singularly reckless of the misery and disrepute accruing to himself and others from their constant violation ;—that one in the performance of his public functions was unaffected and in the estimate of his own importance commonly unassuming ; the other fond of display, sometimes resorting to trick and finesse to increase vulgar admiration of his powers ; that one drew upon his purse and influence to forward the views of unfriended merit ; while the other from incorrigible negligence is believed to have disgusted or consigned to obscurity and distress many promising claimants to dramatic literature :—if these and many minor peculiarities be contrasted, there may be found perhaps very ample grounds for jealousy, but proceeding from quite the opposite quarter to that which the passage from Dr. Parr would insinuate.

Another part of the same letter gives a lively picture of the agitation occasioned by this dispute among the friends of opposition. “ The ferment and alarm are universal, and something must be done ; for it is a conflagration in which

* Mr. Burke frequently expressed dislike to Sheridan's jests in private society against religion. A favorite subject for ridicule was the doctrine of the Trinity : which, having become the subject of his ribaldry at the table of Lord Crewe, gave offence to that Nobleman and his Lady, who from this and other causes found it advisable to decline, as they told Mr. Haviland Burke, giving him further invitations to dine, long before they deemed it expedient to interdict him their house altogether.

they must perish, unless it be stopped. All the papers are with Burke,—even the Foxite papers which I have seen. I know his violence, and temper, and obstinacy of opinion, and—but I will not speak out, *for I think him the greatest man upon the earth.* * * *He is uncorrupt, I know, but his passions are quite headstrong.*”

In the midst of heated discussions occasioned by this rupture at home, Mr. Burke was taken to task for his doctrines from a more distant quarter by a gentleman of whom, though their acquaintance was not of long standing, he entertained a favourable opinion.

Mr. Mercer, who in venturing to argue this question only flourished the sword of Harlequin against the armour of Achilles was a man who having successfully accomplished the common business of life, that of making money, believed himself also qualified to make, or at least to judge of and to explain, the laws which influence and bind together a nation. Springing from an humble condition in life, he became after various changes, Captain and general merchant in the East Indies, where in twenty years he accumulated reputably a fortune of more than sixty thousand pounds. With this and the esteem of his acquaintance, among whom was Lord Macartney, Governor of Madras, he returned in 1787, to spend the remainder of life in ease and honour in his native spot, Newry, in Ireland. He possessed a good understanding, an inquiring mind, had read much, and evinced that energy of character in maintaining opinions once formed, common to self-educated men. His spirit and cast of mind will appear from the following inscription on a plate of gold, first suspended in the cabin of his ship, and then transferred to the dining-room of his residence in Arno's vale—

“Hail! Independence; hail! Heav'n's next best gift
To that of life, and an immortal soul,
The life of life! that to the banquet high,
And sober meal gives taste.”

In England, he eagerly sought out Burke; proud of the name, principles, and acquirements of so distinguished a countryman. It would not be necessary however to say anything of him here otherwise than as forming a specimen of that numerous class who, looking only at a few of the leading characteristics of public men, deem them bound irrevocably to certain principles, which, whether working well or ill, must

in their estimate be carried out. Thus, he could not conceive liberty however fashioned or exercised to be bad; and most of all wondered that it should find an opponent in Mr. Burke. He wrote therefore for an explanation on this point from one—"celebrated for the clearness of his head, and the philanthropy of his heart." The reply exhibits the usual ability of the writer in which the mistakes of his correspondent are quietly but irresistibly put down.

Such an opponent was soon disposed of. But there were others of more weight and information, and possessed of wider views, whom it was necessary if possible to convince. Among these was his old friend Mr. Philip Francis, who had become still more intimate by supplying information in the prosecution of Hastings. Burke had already made large progress in committing his thoughts to paper, and even begun to stamp them with the authority of the press; two proof sheets being sent to Francis, who had previously seen part of the manuscript, for his opinion. His reply, of the same date as the letter of Mercer (19 February, 1790) gives the work unqualified condemnation. No persuasion addressed to his fame, station in the House of Commons, or as Privy Councillor was left untried to suppress its publication. He terms the notice of the French queen pure foppery—any altercation with Dr. Price or others, for altercation there must be—disgraceful.—"The mischief you are going to do yourself is to my apprehension palpable. It is visible. It will be audible. I snuff it in the wind. I taste it already. I feel it in every sense; and so will you hereafter." Concluding with the cordial anathema of a thoroughly vexed friend—"I wish you were at the devil for giving me all this trouble!"

To this characteristic epistle the two Burkes father and son, replied. The latter most truly says,—and it should not be forgotten in estimating the character of the former—"My father's opinions are never hastily adopted; and even those ideas which have often appeared to me only the effects of momentary heat, or casual impression, I have afterwards found beyond the possibility of doubt to be the result of systematic meditation, perhaps of years; or else if adopted on the spur of the occasion, yet formed upon the conclusions of long and philosophical experience and supported by no trifling depth of thought." He adds with filial admiration—"Are you so little conversant with my father as to feel no deference for his judg-

ment, or to mistake the warmth of his manner for the heat of his mind? Do I not know my father at this time of day? I tell you, his folly is wiser than the wisdom of the common herd of able men." His father's answer is calm, friendly, and more at length. He had sat up rather late at Carlton-house, had found the letter on his table on his return, and wrote without having slept—is sorry still to find what he knew before that they "differed only in every thing;"—proceeds to reply to his observations; and states that the looseness of style of which his correspondent complained appertained to the epistolary mode of communication. He had previously it appears, written to Francis that a scheme shown to him by that gentleman for the establishment of a general bank in France had no solid prospect of success.

The next avowed difference of opinion of Mr Burkewith Opposition, was on the repeal of the Corporation and Test Acts, moved by Mr. Fox on the 2nd of March; but it seemed rather opposition as to times and circumstances, than from principle. In the course of it he warmly defended his right honourable friend, the mover, from insinuations thrown out against his enterprising character should he come into power, by Mr. Pitt.—"He was surprised that the Chancellor of the Exchequer should think ill of a friend of the dissenters,—more especially when it was remembered that a former minister of this country—a man of brilliant talents and acknowledged abilities—who had directed the government with great glory to its national character, and great safety to the constitution in church and state—a man whom he believed the right honourable gentleman would not think lightly of—he meant the Earl of Chatham—had been considered an especial protector of the dissenters. That Noble Lord had gone so far as to tell the House of Peers, in reply to an accusation of Dr. Drummond, Archbishop of York, of the pastors of the dissenters being 'men of close ambition.' 'They are so, my Lords; and their ambition is to keep close to the college of fishermen, not of cardinals; to the doctrine of inspired apostles, not to the degrees of interested and aspiring bishops. They contend for a spiritual creed and spiritual worship. We have a Calvinistic creed, a popish liturgy, and an Arminian clergy.' Thus his lordship selected the worst names of other religions to apply to our church and liturgy.

"Had the present question," he continued, "been brought

on ten years sooner, he himself would have felt bound to vote in the affirmative; but such doubts had since arisen in his mind, that when the same thing was moved in 1787 and 1789 (by Mr. Beaufoy), extremely unwilling to vote against it, yet not satisfied that he was right in voting for it, he quitted the House without voting at all. At the present moment, he thought the repeal more particularly inexpedient—there was a wild spirit of innovation abroad, which required not indulgence but restraint.” Whether from the effect of this speech, which embraced many details of the hostile spirit of dissenters to the church, or the exertions of Mr. Pitt, or the general alarm in the country, this question which in the preceding session received a faint negative from no more than 20, was now smothered by a majority of 189. In the general abuse soon afterwards poured upon him, many pages were written to prove his inconsistency in thus opposing a measure formerly supported with all his powers. On the other hand nearly as many pages were employed to defend him from the charge on the ground that the dissenters of 1790 being busy meddling politicians, whose aim was the possession of political power rather than religious freedom, he was justified in denying to them what he had wished to concede to the conscientious body who solicited his support in 1772. This attack like many others, arose from misinformation; the defence therefore was unnecessary. He did *not* advocate the repeal of the test act in 1772, for the simple reason that no such repeal was proposed. The facts of the matter were these:—At the period in question the dissenting ministers applied for an enlargement of the toleration act, or for a repeal of the clause which required subscription to the articles as a condition of enjoying the benefits of that act. This claim—and this alone—he supported; as he continued to do in 1773 and again in 1779 when it was conceded; but at neither of those periods was application made for the repeal of the test act.

The other chief measures in which he took part, were in voting an increase of income to the Speaker of the House of Commons, paying in the course of his speech several compliments to Mr. Addington; on the claim of the Duke of Athol for certain rights in the Isle of Man; on the quarrel with Spain respecting Nootka Sound, his opinion being strongly in favour of accommodation, for that “as we

never ought to go to war for a profitable wrong, so we ought never to go to war for an unprofitable right ;” on a censure passed on Major Scott for a libel on the House ; and on two resolutions of the managers of the impeachment moved by himself, which were to persevere in the trial generally ; while for the sake of expedition in deciding it, they were to select only the more important charges for adjudication. He likewise opposed a motion by Mr. Flood for parliamentary reform, which produced a very candid confession from Mr. Fox, that though *he* thought such a measure advisable, the country at large did not seem to be of the same opinion. A jest of Burke on this question widely disseminated in private society, threw much ridicule upon the enthusiasts in this cause. A new party of Reformers, he said, had arisen still more pure in their creed than the rest, who deemed annual parliaments not sufficiently frequent, and quoted in support of their doctrine, the latter words of the Statute of Edward III., that “ a parliament shall be holden every year once, and *more often if need be.*” How to designate these gentlemen from their less orthodox associates he knew not, except indeed their tenets furnished the hint, and they be known as the *Ofteuer-if-need-be’s*.

A proposition through the medium of common friends, was made to him about this period by his former acquaintance Gerard Hamilton, to renew that intimacy which had so long suffered estrangement ; but as may be supposed from the indignant feelings formerly expressed, he declined. He had told Mr. Flood at the time, there was “ an eternal separation” between them,—that “ he would not keep a memorial of such a person about him,” and possibly the recollection of some random sarcasms, which Hamilton, though he always did justice to his uncommon powers, had occasionally let off against his party and himself, might have tended to make him keep his word. The reply made to the communication was, that without entertaining the slightest resentful or unfriendly feeling toward Mr. Hamilton, there were several circumstances in their connexion and separation and long subsequent alienation, which would prevent his enjoying the same pleasure as formerly in his society ; and therefore a renewal of intimacy might not be satisfactory to either.

CHAPTER XI.

Publication of Reflections on the Revolution in France—Testimonies in its favour—Reply of Burke to the Universities of Dublin and Oxford, and to Mr. Cumberland—Thomas Paine—Character of Henry IV. of France—Letter to a Member of the National Assembly—Rupture with Mr. Fox—Jury Bill of 1791—Parliamentary business—Anecdotes.

As early certainly as September, 1789, Mr. Burke fixing his thoughts stedfastly on the great convulsion proceeding in a neighbouring country, and willing to state them fully to the world, as well as to enable the reflecting part of mankind to think more justly of the event itself, had decided on their publication. This task was begun and carried on with his wonted ardour and disregard of labour. We have seen by the discussion with Francis, that some progress had been made in printing ; and alluding to the anxious emotions to which it gave rise says in a letter to Lord Charlemont of the 25th May, " I have been at once much occupied and much agitated with my employment." The elements of the work, for months floating in his mind, or in some form or another committed to paper, had been collected, re-written, enlarged, amended, and re-modelled to the form in which he had determined to publish—that of a letter to the French gentleman who had before consulted him on the subject. The whole was polished with extraordinary care, more than a dozen of revises being thrown off and destroyed according to Dodsley's account, before the writer could please himself. It was set off with every attraction of the highest style of eloquence of which the English language is susceptible, and of the most vivid and striking imagery in the whole compass of English prose. It was impressed on the judgment by acute reasoning, by great penetration into the motives of human action, by maxims of the most sound and practical wisdom, by expositions of the impracticable nature of the new government, and of the evil or mistaken designs of its framers. Nothing, which his genius, his knowledge, or his observation could supply, was omitted to give popularity to the " Reflections on the Revolution in France."

In the beginning of November 1790, this celebrated work made its appearance, and a French translation, by his friend M. Dupont, quickly spread its reputation over Europe. The

book proved one of the remarkable literary events of the century ; for it may be doubted whether any previous political production ever excited so much attention and discussion, so much praise from one party, and animadversion from another ; but ultimately among the great majority of persons, such general conviction of the correctness of his views, as to fully succeed in turning the stream of public opinion from the channel in which it had hitherto flowed. The circulation of the work corresponded with its fame. Richard Burke writing to Shackleton, November 8th, 1790, says "Seven thousand copies have been sold in six days, and to all appearance as many more will be soon demanded." Within the first year above 19,000 copies were sold in England, and about 13,000 in France, the whole number of English copies disposed of within a few years being estimated at more than 30,000—and this at a time when there was not a fourth of the demand for books of any kind that there is at present. Some experienced booksellers have said that the sale was greater than that of any preceding book whatever of the same price. The interest which it excited did not cease with the moment ; it was sought after then and since by persons little prone to political discussion for the wisdom of the lessons it taught ; by many for its literary beauties ; by many in order to retrace the fearful and extraordinary events there in great measure foretold ; and it will ever be a source of interest to the statesman, and of admiration to the man of taste and genius. No analysis of this or any other of the writings of this eloquent man, is intended here. In the instance before us, it would be particularly unnecessary. Almost every one who pretends to read at all, has read the work. To such, a disquisition would be at least meagre and unsatisfactory. To him who has not, it would impart no means of appreciating the force and beauty of the original ; for of Burke it may be said, as Johnson remarked of Shakspeare, that to attempt to recommend him by select extracts, would be but to follow the example of the pedant in Hierocles, who when he offered his house to sale, carried a brick in his pocket as a specimen. Many of the passages in it form matter of continual quotation for their eloquence ; and few of its pages but contain something profound in remark, novel in thought, and ingenious and beautiful in illustration. The peroration, though in general but

little quoted or noticed, is not the least striking passage ; nor will the prophetic remark on the vicissitudes likely to be experienced in the forms of the new government, be lightly passed over by the reader.

"I have told you candidly," he says to his correspondent, "my sentiments. I think they are not likely to alter yours. I do not know that they ought. You are young ; you cannot guide, but must follow the fortune of your country. But hereafter they may be of some use to you, *in some future form which your commonwealth may take. In the present it can hardly remain ; but before its final settlement it may be obliged to pass, as one of our poets says, ' through great varieties of untried being,' and in all its transmigrations to be purified by fire and blood.*

"I have little to recommend my opinions but long observation and much impartiality. They come from one who has been no tool of power, no flatterer of greatness ; and who in his last acts does not wish to belie the tenour of his life. They come from one almost the whole of whose public exertion has been a struggle for the liberty of others ; from one in whose breast no anger durable or vehement has ever been kindled but by what he considered as tyranny ; and who snatches from his share in the endeavours which are used by good men to discredit opulent oppression,* the hours he has employed on your affairs ; and who in so doing persuades himself he has not departed from his usual office. They come from one who desires honours, distinctions, and emoluments, but little ; and who expects them not at all ; who has no contempt for fame, and no fear of obloquy ; who shuns contention though he will hazard an opinion ; from one who wishes to preserve consistency ; but who would preserve consistency by varying his means to secure the unity of his end ; and when the vessel in which he sails may be endangered by overloading it upon one side, is desirous of carrying the small weight of his reasons to that which may preserve its equipoise."

The testimonies of approval which flowed in from every quarter soon after the appearance of the book, evinced not merely admiration of his eloquence and literary talents ; but his power over the question in discussion. No writer

* In allusion to the prosecution of Mr. Hastings.

probably was ever before so complimented. The Sovereigns subsequently assembled at Pilnitz, particularly the Emperor of Germany, transmitted through one of his ministers with whom Mr. Burke had some future correspondence, a tribute of marked approbation. The French Princes did the same by means of his son and Mons. Cazales. Catherine of Russia directed her Ambassador, Count de Woronzow, to communicate in her name sentiments of a similar nature. His Majesty, George III., not only gave the work an attentive perusal, but had a number of copies elegantly bound, which he distributed among his friends with the remark, that it "was a book which every gentleman ought to read." Stanislaus, the unfortunate King of Poland to whom Burke was personally known, sent him his likeness in a gold medal, with a letter in English, deeming that language, as he said, the most copious and energetic to convey the high sense which he entertained of his patriotism and talents. The reply of the author stated in expressive terms that so high a mark of esteem might be supposed to awaken his vanity, but it tended rather to excite his veneration and esteem for the character of a Prince whom he had long admired. He possessed, he said, no cabinet of medals, but had he the richest in the universe, he was persuaded he would be at a loss in what illustrious series to place that of his Majesty:—it must be placed the first of a new one. He praised the revolution in Poland, the origin and progress of which he ascribed to the King; "you," said he, "that may be truly called the father, and not the proprietor of your people."

A more remarkable honour and one hitherto wholly unknown or unnoticed in England, was a translation of this work by the unfortunate Louis XVI. whose pen had been early in life employed in giving a French version of some of the first volumes of Gibbon's History. Writing from Brussels in August 1791, young Burke says to his father—"There is but one man in the secret confidence and management (of the French party) that is M. de la Quenille. He seems to be perfectly sound-headed, perfectly right in all his ideas. He was somewhat an older intimate of the King's infancy, which has subsisted in a close friendship ever since. He praises him in every respect, except that of adherence to his resolutions which he

says are always right on all points. *He tells me the poor man has translated your book from end to end.*"*

The praises of the learned, however, preceded, in the order of time, the approval of the great. The first tribute of this kind which he received from a public body, came very appropriately, as the nurse of his genius, from Dublin. In December, 1790, on a motion of the Provost (the head of the University) the honorary degree of LL.D. was unanimously conferred upon him in full convocation, and an address afterwards presented in a gold box, to express their sense of his services—"as the powerful advocate of the constitution, the friend of public order, virtue, and the happiness of mankind; and in testimony of the high respect entertained by the University for the various endowments of his capacious mind, and for his superior talents and abilities."

An address from the resident graduates of Oxford was about the same time, presented to him through Mr. Windham, which spoke the sentiments of nearly the whole of the university, though a temporary cabal or misunderstanding among the heads of houses, prevented the diploma degree of LL.D. being conferred upon a writer whose philoso-

* That the unfortunate Monarch was a good English scholar, quite competent to the performance, appears from other authorities. Unwilling, it appears, to be known, he thought proper to print his share of Gibbon under another name, "Le troisieme ouvrage de (Louis XVI) est L'Histoire de la decadence de l'Empire Romain par Gibbon. Apres on avoir traduit cinq volumes, M. le Dauphin, ne voulant pas etre connu, charges M. le Clerc de Sept-Chenes son lecteur du Cabinet, de les faire imprimer sous son nom. M. le Clerc Sept-Chenes ayant prie M. le Garde des-sceaux de lui donner un censeur, l'ouvrage fut envoye a l'Abbe Aubert qui le rendit avec un approbation motivee et distinguee. Environ deux ans apres, M. le Comte de Vergennes, Ministre des affaires etrangeres, fut demander le censeur de l'ouvrage; l'Abbe Aubert se rend chez le ministre, qui en lui remettant un exemplaire relie en maroquin rouge et dore sur tranche lui dit—'Je suis charge par le traducteur de vous remettre cet exemplaire pour vous remercier de l'examen que vous avez pris la peine de faire de sa traduction et de l'approbation que vous lui avez donnee.' Sur l'observation du censeur que M. le Clerc de Sept-chenes aurait per se dispenser de la magnificence de la reliure, M. le Vergennes lui dit—'C'est M. le Dauphine qui est veritable traducteur, et qui m'a charge de vous faire ce cadeau en son nom.'"

"Nous tenons cette anecdote de l'Abbe Aubert lui-meme."—*Extrait du Roi Martyr ou Esquisse du Portrait de Louis XVI. par A. J. D. B. De Moulieres, Paris, 1815.*

phical essay on the Sublime and Beautiful, forms a volume of occasional reference in their seat of learning, and whose eloquence in this instance tended to preserve and to honour that and all similar establishments.

The Archbishop of Aix, and others of the dignified clergy of France, wrote letters expressive of their obligations and acknowledgments "that the first orator of England had become their defender." Nearly all the superior members of our own church, the great body of the nobility, the most eminent statesmen with few exceptions, and several of the chief men of letters, pronounced him the saviour, not merely of the English, but of all established governments. One of those who from his heart, principles, and good sense, he thought best qualified to form an opinion, was Sir Joshua Reynolds; to him therefore the work had been submitted in manuscript, and it received his unqualified approval. Gibbon proved particularly warm in his applause. "I thirst," said he, a short time before he saw the volume, "for Mr. Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France*." After perusing it, he wrote on two occasions—"Burke's book is a most admirable medicine against the French disease. I admire his eloquence; I approve his politics; I adore his chivalry; and I can almost forgive his reverence for church establishments."

In Wilberforce's diary we find (22d November)—"Went to Wimbledon (to dine with Mr. Pitt) Dundas, Lord Chatham, Pitt, Grenville, Ryder. Much talk about Burke's book. Lord Chatham, Pitt, and I seemed to agree—contra Grenville and Ryder." "26. Read Burke's book for three hours;" and alludes to the perusal on other occasions. Horace Walpole in reference to it thus writes of the Queen of France—"Had I Mr. Burke's powers I would have described her in his words—I like 'the swords leaping out of their scabbards'; in short I am not more charmed with his wit and eloquence than with his enthusiasm. * * * It paints her exactly as she appeared to me the first time I saw her when Dauphiness. She was going after the late King to chapel, and shot through the room like an aerial being, all brightness and grace, and without seeming to touch the earth." Burke had sent him a copy of the work; the reply was that "unless he wrote as well he could not sufficiently express his admiration." Again he writes of this work—"I am not

surprised at Mr. Fox and Mr. Fitzpatrick for disliking the *extent* of Mr. Burke's notions. I should be mortified if the former did not admire the composition, and should readily distrust my own judgment if the latter and Mr. Hare did not keep me in countenance. The last I have been told, says, that though he would submit to Mr. Fox in every thing else, he cannot give up Mr. Burke's book."

Miss Burney likewise promised by the influence of this volume, to return to her allegiance to her former idol—"I own myself entirely of Mrs. Montague's opinion about Mr. Burke's book. It is the noblest, deepest, most animated, and exalted work that I think I have ever read. * * * How can man with all his inequalities be so little resembling to himself at different periods as this man? He is always a prodigy;—in fascinating talents and incomprehensible inconsistencies. When I read however, such a book as this, I am apt to imagine the whole of such a being must be right as well as the parts, and that the time may come when the mists that obscure the motives and incentives to those actions and proceedings which seem incongruous, may be chased away."

"I conceive," writes Cumberland, who though seldom given to eulogize a brother author, was on this occasion surprised into an express letter of congratulation the first week after the publication, a proof at least of his critical judgment—"there is not to be found in all the writings of my day, perhaps I may say not in the English language, so brilliant a cluster of fine and beautiful passages as we are presented with in Edmund Burke's inimitable tract on the French Revolution. It is most highly coloured and most richly ornamented, but there is elegance in its splendour, and dignity in its magnificence. The orator demands attention in a loud and lofty tone, but his voice never loses its melody, nor its periods their sweetness. When he has roused us with the thunder of his eloquence, he can at once, Timotheus-like, choose a melancholy theme, and melt us into pity: there is grace in his anger; for he can inveigh without vulgarity; he can modulate the strongest burst of passion, for even in his madness there is music."

Several eulogies as strong as that of Cumberland might be transcribed, but one delivered soon afterward by a professed political opponent, the late Lord (then Mr.) Erskine, is too just and characteristic to be omitted. "I shall take

care to put Mr. Burke's work on the French Revolution, into the hands of those whose principles are left to my formation. I shall take care that they have the advantage of doing, in the regular progression of youthful studies, what I have done even in the short intervals of laborious life; that they shall transcribe, with their own hands, from all the works of this most extraordinary person, and from the last among the rest, the soundest truths of religion; the justest principles of morals, inculcated and rendered delightful by the most sublime eloquence; the highest reach of philosophy brought down to the level of common minds by the most captivating taste; the most enlightened observations on history and the most copious collection of useful maxims from the experience of common life; and separate for themselves the good from the bad."

Another writer* possessed himself of no small claims to eloquence speaks of the execution of the work in nearly a similar style. But its doctrines were as little to his taste as to that of the great advocate just mentioned, both being infected by the political epidemic of the day.—"These are the views which distinguish the political writings of Mr. Burke, an author whose splendid and unequalled powers have given vogue and fashion to certain tenets, which from any other pen would have appeared abject and contemptible. In the field of reason the encounter would not be difficult, but who can withstand the fascination and magic of his eloquence? The excursions of his genius are immense! His imperial fancy has laid all nature under tribute, and has collected riches from every scene of the creation, and every walk of art. His eulogium on the Queen of France is a master-piece of pathetic composition; so select are its images, so fraught with tenderness and so rich with colours 'dipt in heaven,' that he who can read it without rapture may have merit as a reasoner, but must resign all pretensions to taste and sensibility. His imagination is in truth only too prolific: a world of itself, where he dwells in the midst of chimerical alarms, is the dupe of his own enchantments, and starts, like Prospero, at the spectres of his own creation."

Dr. Beattie who as far as opinions went, had always hitherto been opposed to him in politics, but who knew the soundness

* The Rev. Robert Hall—"Apology for the Freedom of the Press."

of his principles when any real danger threatened the state, thus writes, April 25, 1790, six months before the publication.—“I wish Mr. Burke would publish what he intended on the present state of France. He is a man of principle, and a friend to religion, to law, and to monarchy, as well as to liberty.” One of the suspected authors of Junius’s Letters (Hugh Boyd) in allusion to this production of his old acquaintance, and the event it was meant to reprobate, thus writes—“But to turn to the more pleasing view, where the finest talents combat on the side of truth. We have seen their triumph in the noblest cause; in the cause of religion, law, and order: in defence of every sacred post and barrier, essential not alone to the security and happiness of mankind, but to the very existence of society. The sublime comprehension of that penetrating genius (Mr Burke), which in the early dawn of democracy saw the destructive principle of general conflagration that was to flame in its meridian, gave the alarm to the world; and his warning voice was heard. The baleful influence, threatening every confine of humanity, was averted; and the portentous meteor, consumed in its own fires, passes away for ever.”

Even Mr. Francis was softened—not won—for dissent still overpowered feelings of admiration.—“It has not yet been in my power,” he writes hurriedly, November 3rd, “to read more than a third of your book. I must taste it deliberately. The flavour is too high; the wine is too rich. I cannot take a draught of it.” And while questioning the accuracy of Burke’s deductions from French history, he ventures to find fault again with his style in a way which we should scarcely expect from the most fastidious critic.—“Once for all, I wish you would let me teach you to write English. To me who am to read everything you write it would be a great comfort, and to you no sort of disparagement. Why will you not allow yourself to be persuaded that polish is material to preservation?” This was followed by one from Lord John Cavendish (Nov. 14) who says—“All men of sense must I think, feel obliged to you for showing in so forcible a manner that confusion is not the road to reformation.”

On the other hand, the book was reprobated as assailing the foundations of liberty, by a party bold, numerous, and able, at the head of which, or countenancing it, stood Mr. Fox. His censures were not merely unqualified, but delivered

as he himself avowed, in all companies whenever the work became a subject of discussion. Some months afterwards he termed it in the House of Commons, with more of pique, or less of judgment, than could be expected from such a man, "a libel on all free governments," and, "he disliked it as much as any of Mr. Paine's;" these remarks were not very delicate or conciliatory as applied to the productions of a friend; but they verified a remark of Burke at a future period, that "the French Revolution had not merely shaken all the thrones of Europe, but shaken his friend Fox's heart and understanding out of their right places."

The dissentient party embraced besides many Members of Opposition, some philosophers, a large body of second-rate literary men, some clergymen, many lawyers, many dissenting ministers, and members of the profession of physic—all therefore belonging to the educated classes; but the great majority without claim to practical acquaintance with politics; men deep in speculation and in books, but wholly ignorant of the workings of governments; who knew nothing of human nature in great and untried emergencies such as the state of France then exhibited; who mistook warm feelings and honest prejudices for sound principles; some who with good intentions toward mankind would have committed the grossest errors in reducing them to practice; and many whose views upon the constitution of the country were more than questionable.

By this body Mr. Burke and his volume* were assailed with a degree of animosity unprecedented even in the political warfare of England, and so perseveringly continued as to be still occasionally heard. No pains were spared to produce this effect. Every epithet of abuse in the language, as may be seen

* A celebrated phrase was bruited about in every form of speech and writing, in order to excite popular indignation. In speaking of the destruction of the nobility and clergy, he said that along with these, its natural protectors, learning would be "trodden down under the hoofs of a swinish multitude." The expression though plainly figurative, was tortured to mean that he actually thought the people no better than swine; yet all other impassioned writers have dealt in the same license of language, without reproach or even remark; among which the reader will immediately recollect "the common dung o' the soil," and many others as strong, applied to the mass of mankind. Even Republican Milton uses the words "herd confused," "miscellaneous rubble," applied to the multitude; so little respect was there in the mind of that sturdy opponent of monarchy for the "majesty of the people."

by the curious reader in the ephemeral writings of that day, was applied to him ; and every action or expression of his life that could be tortured into sinister meaning, was raked up in order to show his inconsistency. Yet after all they proved so few and frivolous as not to have been thought worth repeating ; and thus he " whose whole life had been a struggle for the liberty of others," was reviled as the enemy of all liberty. The truth was that their and his ideas of liberty were, and always had been, different. They chose to become angry because a man so long and generally celebrated as its advocate, should hesitate to give his sanction to anything which assumed the name however questionable might be the substance. They made no allowance for having mistaken him, or for his not agreeing with them in the detail. Because he differed in opinion with them on this point, it was inferred erroneously however, that he must differ from himself. They thought that liberty, no matter in what shape or garb it came, or how accompanied, or by whatever qualities or characteristics distinguished, must necessarily be good, as his correspondent Mr. Mercer had expressly said. They looked chiefly to the abstract idea of the thing, not to the form it assumed, or the effects it produced.

Mr. Burke, on the contrary, would not allow the term liberty to be applicable to the mad fury of the populace in a course stained by incessant violence and bloodshed ; which inflicted or permitted the most grinding tyranny and injustice on persons and property ; which was in itself, a crude and untried theory, unsanctioned by reason and undisciplined by law ; at variance with the experience of mankind, and with the ancient and reasonable habits and institutions of the country itself. The liberty decreed by the National Assembly he considered a mockery.—Liberty, no matter how plausible the form or high-sounding the pretension, was in his opinion, liberty only, when it secured equal civil rights, equal justice and protection, equal social enjoyments and privileges, to all members of the community.

Sentiments similar to these occur so frequently in his earlier and later works, in all his speeches and writings on the subject, that it seems strange how they could ever be misunderstood. A passage in his speech against the repeal of the Marriage Act, in 1781, speaks this language so forcibly and explicitly that no excuse can avail for mis-

taking or misrepresenting his idea of freedom. Another passage from one of his speeches at Bristol, in 1774, illustrates similar sentiments : "The distinguishing part of our constitution is its liberty. To preserve that liberty inviolate seems the particular duty and proper trust of a member of the House of Commons. *But the liberty, the only liberty I mean, is a liberty connected with order ; that only exists along with virtue and order, but which cannot exist without them.*" Addressing the same constituents in 1780, in allusion to the condition of the Roman Catholics, he says, "*I must fairly tell you, that so far as my principles are concerned (principles that I hope will only depart with my last breath), that I have no idea of a liberty unconnected with honesty and justice ; * * factions in republics have been and are full as capable as monarchs of the most cruel oppression and injustice. It is but too true, that the love and even the very idea of genuine liberty is extremely rare.*"

Any one professing such sentiments as these could not do otherwise than oppose the French Revolution, for it fulfilled none of his conceptions of genuine liberty. We have seen that he had his doubts of its nature from the first, and far from wavering in opinion like some of his contemporaries, gradually rose from caution to apprehension, from apprehension to certainty, that such proceedings as were going on could be productive only of enormous evils. He did not hate the revolution in France simply because it was a revolution, but because it was a bad one ; or rather the utter dissolution of the main elements of government, religion, and morals—all the means which not merely bind men together, but have in fact from the condition of savages made us men. He did not war against liberty, but against the abuses committed under its name ; not against freedom but against licentiousness. He allowed no inherent power in the half or the majority of a nation to annihilate the persons, the property, or the honours of the remainder at their will and pleasure, by way of political experiment or speculative improvement. "He could not admit the right of any people to do what they pleased, until he first knew what it pleased them to do."

It is remarkable, and another instance of singular keenness and length of view, that though the danger was obvious to him, neither the government nor the nation at large had

any idea that French opinions and principles were so generally diffused in England, or had made so many converts. But the publication of his book disclosed the extent of the mischief which had been silently though rapidly spreading, by the numbers of answers it produced. I have counted no less than thirty-eight which came out within a year or two, and several have doubtless escaped notice, while others may have appeared at a later period; but were all the letters, essays, fragments, and invectives of every denomination collected, which appeared then and since, in magazines, reviews, newspapers, and every form of publication periodical and otherwise on this prolific theme they would amount to many hundreds.

In the list of opponents were the names of Priestly, Price (who dying soon after the appearance of the "Reflections," which his sermon had partly provoked, was said by his friends to have been hurt or killed by him), Earl Stanhope, Mrs. Wollstonecraft, Mrs. Macaulay Graham, the historian. Mr. (afterwards Sir James) Mackintosh, and Thomas Paine. Not one of their works has survived. The "*Vindiciæ Gallicæ*" alone, was the production of a more sober inquirer, a scholar and a gentleman, who though he then wrote upon politics with the dim and flickering light of a closet philosopher, soon learned to judge and to act in a more practical spirit, chiefly by the teaching of that very master whom he had thus ventured to oppose, and whom he soon afterwards thus characterized—"A writer who was admired by all mankind for his eloquence, but who is if possible, still more admired by all competent judges for his philosophy: a writer of whom I may justly say, that he was *gravissimus et dicendi et intelligendi auctor et magister*." Even from the first he exhibited the confidence in himself of one who could afford to be at once bold and liberal in his opposition to the great orator—who could advocate what he thought freedom to others without madly assaulting the foundations of our own; who could investigate doctrines without descending to personal abuse of the author; who in endeavouring to refute them, could admit his worth, his extraordinary powers, and in spite of clamour to the contrary, the general consistency of his life and principles. Such a man was Sir James Mackintosh, who if not at the head of the party with whom he so long and so vainly laboured,

was certainly not justled from it by anything like superiority of mind among its more acknowledged leaders.

Of a very different description was "The Rights of Man," by Thomas Paine. This remarkable character, who had arrived from America in 1787, brought with him a letter of introduction to Mr. Burke from the Hon. Henry Laurens, ex-President of Congress, who it will be remembered had been released from the Tower in 1781 by the exertions of the former, requesting his influence to attract public notice to some mechanical contrivances of Mr. Paine, particularly the model of an iron bridge. Mr. Burke, with accustomed hospitality, invited him to Beaconsfield, took him during a summer excursion to Yorkshire to several iron-foundries there in order to gain the opinions of practical men, and introduced him to several persons of rank. At this time his guest, whom it is doubtful whether he knew to be an Englishman, professed to have relinquished politics. But soon afterward having visited France in order to inspect plans and models in the Office of Bridges and Highways introduced by a letter from Dr. Franklin to the Duke de la Rochefoucauld, the incipient disorders of that country revived in his mind the dormant spirit of turbulence and dissatisfaction toward existing institutions inherent in the man. He returned to England well-informed of the designs of the popular leaders, of which many intelligible intimations were dropped to Burke, with a recommendation that he should endeavour to introduce a *more enlarged system of liberty* into England, using reform in Parliament as the most obvious means.

This hint was as may be believed, coldly received. "Do you really imagine, Mr. Paine, that the constitution of this kingdom requires such innovations, or could exist with them, or that any reflecting man would seriously engage in them? You are aware that I have all my life opposed such schemes of reform; of course, because I knew them not to be reform." Not discouraged by this rebuff, Paine wrote to the same purport from Paris in the summer of 1789, and there is little doubt, first communicated to his distinguished acquaintance verbal information that the destruction of the monarchy was resolved upon; that the leaders had determined to set fire to the four corners of France sooner than not carry their principles into practice; and that no danger

was to be apprehended from the army, for it was *gained*. A note to that effect was said to be dated only three days before the destruction of the Bastile.

His intimacy with Burke had however declined previously to the appearance of the "Reflections," and his more noxious peculiarities remained unknown; the leveller and the deist being shrouded under the guise of an ingenious mechanist. But the "Rights of Man," written in answer to that work, exhibited at once the mental deformity of the man, inimical to nearly every thing that bore the stamp of authority, or of time, or of opinion. In accordance with this unhappy and mischievous disposition, he had long before stifled the best feelings of our nature by voluntary dereliction of the marriage ties and duties; he had divested himself of the troublesome restraints of religion; he had shaken off all confined notions of attachment to country. Nothing of an Englishman remained of him but the name, and even that he tried to extinguish by becoming successively by adoption an American and a Frenchman: but as his principles and conduct were a scandal to all, so all perhaps would willingly be rid of the dishonour attached to the owning of such a citizen.

It was his aim by perverting what capacity he possessed, not to make men better or happier, but to be discontented with what they were, with what they knew, or with what they already enjoyed. His systems, both in religion and politics, led not merely to the disorganization of states, but of the human mind itself, by setting it adrift on the waters of doubt and despair, without a resting-place or landmark for its guidance in this world, or hope in the next. To a style of writing and reasoning well adapted to impose upon ordinary understandings, he added a cool temper and designing head, unfettered by the common restraints and scruples of mankind. To the trades of staymaker, schoolmaster, and exciseman in his native country, he had added what is so often the resort of desperate men, the profession of a patriot in America. He had proved a brute to his wife, a defaulter to his trust, a traitor to his country, a disbeliever in his God; and having already successfully aided and abetted rebellion abroad, seemed to be cut out for the presiding genius of a revolution at home, if not prematurely taken off by the hand of the executioner. But as if in person to warn us of the desolating tendency of his doctrines, he completed the cata-

logue of offences by adultery with the wife of his friend, by the brutal treatment and desertion of his victim, by drunkenness, and by disgusting personal negligences. The very excess of moral degradation almost made him an object of compassion. His life was evil, and his end miserable.

The book was characteristic of the man. Its purpose was, through the debasing principle of envy, which is after all the inciting motive of a leveller, to reduce mankind to one standard; to write up a sort of confusion made easy, by urging the baser to war against the better passions of our nature, in order to pull down superior station, talents, virtues, and distinctions to the level of the lowest. It was an open declaration of hostility to all the institutions which we in England had been accustomed to consider as our ornament and pride; not a reform of real or imaginary abuses, but a pretty plain recommendation to demolish present government altogether for the pleasure of building afresh on the republican model—good perhaps in the eyes of an American, but at variance with the habits, the feelings, the honest convictions and prejudices of an Englishman. It affords an illustration of the frenzy of the day, that this production was devoured rather than read, by that strong party, many of them of rank and influence, who intent on committing a species of moral suicide disseminated it in cheap editions through the country; thus flinging a fire-brand into every cottage to burst out and consume themselves. While in the clubs and societies of cities the same insane spirit of animosity, under cover of affected satisfaction, was shown in the favourite toast constantly drunk "thanks to Mr. Burke for the discussion he has provoked,"—as if they firmly hoped or wished the world to believe, that he had injured those vital interests of the state, of which in fact his book proved the salvation.

It may be remarked that two other literary opponents on this question, Mr. Christie and Mr. Bousfield, were among the number of his acquaintance. The latter, who proved to be the more virulent, had been recommended to his notice by some friends in the county of Cork, of which that gentleman was a native, and had in consequence participated largely in the hospitalities of Beaconsfield as well as something in the friendship of its owner. The only return made was by venting upon him nearly all the abuse of which he was master.

Of another republican acquaintance of rather more celebrity, he gave the following account, when speaking of the address of a deputation from the constitutional society of London, formed of Joel Barlow and John Frost, to the National Convention. "The extravagance of Anacharsis Clootz in wishing to embrace China, Quebec, Bulam, and in short all the world, in the confraternity of France, was not peculiar to him, but was also entertained by all the members of the Assembly. This Clootz was an old acquaintance and correspondent, being very respectably introduced to him, and had no small share in producing the French Revolution. He was a Prussian by birth, highly conversant in every branch of literature, and much better qualified to act the part of a philosopher than John Frost as deputy from the people of Great Britain. In June 1790 this man appeared at the bar of the National Assembly, accompanied by men of all nations, Asiatic, African, and European, of which latter the English made no inconsiderable part. There, as orator of the human race, he invoked for them all the protection and confraternity of France; and this happened on the very day when the Assembly demolished, by a decree, the nobility of France."

A reply from the French correspondent to whom the "Reflections" had been addressed, dated 17th November, 1790, gave Mr. Burke an opportunity of following up his blow by a rejoinder entitled "Letter to a Member of the National Assembly." In this, which appeared in February, 1791, he advances many new observations, sets others in stronger lights, and glances at the characters of some of their writers whose principles it was the fashion to follow, as being no better than what he on another occasion termed "the mere jays and magpies of philosophy." Rousseau he sketches in strong, yet not undue terms, when considered, as he says he must be, either "as a moralist or as nothing," and as "the great professor and founder of the *philosophy of vanity*. I had good opportunities of knowing his proceedings almost from day to day* and he left no doubt on my mind that he entertained no principle either to influence his heart or to

* In 1766, when he came, on the invitation of Hume, and behaved in a manner so extraordinary as to be inexplicable in any other way than to suppose him wholly possessed by what may be termed the *insanity* of vanity. Mr. Burke was then in frequent communication with Hume, and from that philosopher himself heard the proceedings of his extraordinary guest.

guide his understanding, but *vanity*." He asserts in this letter, from almost positive knowledge (the correspondents just mentioned), that the excesses of the revolution were not accidental, as some pretended to believe; but systematically designed from the beginning, even previous to the meeting of the states-general. He hints likewise at the necessity for that coalition of the sovereigns of Europe against France, which took place a few months afterward; and explicitly states the intention of the prevailing faction to put the King to death whenever his name should become no longer necessary to their designs. Mr. Fox writing toward the end of May, says "he has not read Burke's new pamphlet, but it is in general thought to be mere madness."

The declaration of the French Ambassador of his Sovereign's acceptance of the new constitution, drew from Mr. Burke a paper privately presented to the Ministry, "Hints for a Memorial to M. De Montmorin." It recommended the offer of British mediation between that monarch and his subjects on the basis of a free constitution to be guaranteed, if required, by England; and in case of refusal by the popular party, to intimate the design of withdrawing our Minister from a Court where the Sovereign no longer enjoyed personal liberty or political consideration.

In the mean time several threatening indications proclaimed an approaching breach in the Whig party, very few of whom, except two or three of his personal friends, could be persuaded by Burke of the irretrievable mischiefs at work in France. Mr. Fox expressed his approval of the principles, though not of the proceedings there, twice or thrice in no measured terms; once in debate on the Russian armament, when Mr. Burke rising to reply, was overpowered by continued cries of question from his own side of the House; and again on a Bill providing a constitution for Canada, when the latter was not present. On this occasion Fox directed pointed censure against some of the chief doctrines in Burke's late publications, directly questioning the utility of hereditary power, or honours, or titles of rank, concluding with a sneer at "ribbons red and blue." These opinions might have been honest, though perhaps neither sound nor in the best taste; and at the moment were unquestionably imprudent. They echoed but the revolutionary language of the day, to which sanction was thus given by a man of no ordinary weight in the country; and could not be considered other

than a direct challenge to discussion, addressed to his old associate and political instructor.

As such Mr. Burke evidently considered it. On the 6th of May on the same (Quebec) bill, he rose to state his sentiments in detail. But in adverting to the French Constitution by name and the unhappy scenes to which it had given rise, was loudly called to order from the Opposition benches. Mr. Fox, who had himself made allusions as strong to the same measure, unexpectedly assailed him by an ironical defence, recommending his friends in effect, to let him say what he pleased. Mr. Burke, after noticing this circumstance, resumed his argument, and again experienced successively seven or eight other formal interruptions at short intervals, accompanied by speeches to order from different members of his own party; while at the same moment, others on the ministerial side maintained he was perfectly in order. This contention presented amid contending shouts of *Chair! chair! Hear! hear! Order! order! Go on! go on!* a scene which he remarked at the moment was only to be paralleled in the political assemblages of a neighbouring country of which he was endeavouring to convey some idea to the House.

At length, an express vote of censure for noticing the affairs of France was moved against him by Lord Sheffield, and *seconded by Mr. Fox*. Mr. Pitt, on the contrary, leaned to his views and urged his being in order; that he was grateful to the right hon. gentleman for the manly struggle made by him against French principles; that his views should receive support whenever danger approached; and that his zeal and eloquence in such a cause entitled him to the gratitude of his fellow-subjects. Mr. Fox followed in a vehement address, alternately rebuking and complimenting Burke in a high strain, and while vindicating his own opinions, questioning the truth and consistency of those of his right hon. friend who he must ever esteem his master, but who nevertheless seemed to have forgotten the lessons he had once taught him. In support of the charge of inconsistency thus advanced, he quoted several sarcastic and ludicrous remarks of little moment at any time and scarcely worth repeating then, but which as they had been expressed fourteen or fifteen years before, seemed to be raked up for the occasion. In this, there was an appearance of premeditation and want of generosity, which hurt Mr. Burke, as he afterwards expressed to a friend, more than any public occurrence of his life, and he rose to reply under the

influence of painful and strong feelings. He complained after debating the main question, of being treated with harshness and malignity for which the motive seemed unaccountable—of being personally attacked from a quarter where he least expected it after an intimacy of more than twenty-two years,—of his public sentiments and writings being garbled, and his confidential communications violated, to give colour to an unjust charge. At his time of life it was obviously indiscreet to provoke enemies or to lose friends, as he could not hope for the opportunities necessary to acquire others, yet if his steady adherence to the British constitution placed him in such a dilemma, he would risk all and as public duty and prudence taught him with his last breath exclaim, “Fly from the French constitution!” Mr. Fox here observed, “there is no loss of friendship.” “I regret to say there is,” was the reply—“I know the value of my line of conduct; I have indeed made a great sacrifice; I have done my duty though I have lost my friend. There is something in the detested French constitution that envenoms every thing it touches.” After many comments on the question, he attempted to conclude with an elegant apostrophe to the respective heads of the great parties in the state, steadfastly to guard against innovations and untried theories the sacred edifice of the British constitution, when he was again twice interrupted by Mr. Grey.

Mr. Fox, unusually excited by this public renunciation of long intimacy, rose under excited feelings, “so that it was some moments,” says the *Morning Chronicle* report, “before he could proceed. Tears rolled down his cheeks, and he strove in vain to give utterance to feelings that dignified his nature.” When he had recovered, besides adverting to French affairs, an eloquent appeal broke forth to his old and revered friend—to the remembrance of their past attachment—their inalienable friendship—their reciprocal affection, as dear and almost as binding as the ties of nature between father and son. Seldom had there been heard in the House of Commons an appeal so pathetic and so personal. Yet even at the moment when he was seemingly dissolved in tenderness, the pertinacity of the professed thoroughbred disputant prevailed over the feelings of the man. He gave utterance to unusually bitter sarcasms, reiterated his objectionable remarks, adding others not of the most conciliatory tendency, and of

course rather aggravating than extenuating the original offence. Rejoinders on both sides followed without eliciting more amicable sentiments, and thenceforward the intimacy of these illustrious men ceased.

Such are in brief, the facts connected with this memorable dispute, which excited more general interest and produced more important results than any similar disagreement in our political annals. Opposition instantly saw in it the probable loss of much of that consequence they had hitherto enjoyed in the State; and though at first alarmed at the consequences, soon proceeded to utter harsh animadversions upon their late ally, both at the breaking up of the House, as well as on all occasions afterwards, and continued by writers of strong political partialities even to this day, scarcely one of whom but misrepresents the circumstances or motives of the quarrel. This is unfair. If design can be attributed to either party, it would appear assuredly to have rested rather with Mr. Fox and his friends than with Mr. Burke; for though they probably desired no rupture with him, no measures more likely to effect it could be devised than they adopted. There existed evidently a fixed determination to prevent him from delivering his sentiments upon an extraordinary and questionable event on the pretext of being out of order. Admitting him for argument sake to have been out of order, which was not the case as the House decided, was it the business of his *friends* to attack him upon that head?—of the men with whom he had been so long associated, whose career he had often directed, whose battles he had fought, whose credit he had been the first to raise in public esteem—to assail him with vehement disapprobation, persevering interruptions, and votes of censure? All that he asked for or expected was the liberty of expressing his sentiments as Mr. Fox had done—and this they in effect told him he should not be permitted to have upon that particular subject. The natural inference was, that it stood too high in their esteem to be suffered to be exposed to the withering influence of his censure.* There was something in this of political ingratitude, and obviously no small portion of folly and indiscretion; for it impressed general belief in the

* Burke himself wittily observed at a subsequent time, that the topic of France, though open to every one else, was by the opposition *taboo'd* to him—by what rite of authority, or superstition, he could not divine.

country that the minority, instead of viewing the French question as matter of serious inquiry and deliberation, had at once and so heartily adopted its spirit, as to proceed to the last extremities with one of the heads of their body sooner than hear him treat it with reprobation.

There are other reasons which tell in favour of Burke. Far from being the first to broach the topic as a provocative to quarrel, he had on the contrary studiously avoided it in this and the preceding sessions until introduced by the persons who now professed to wish to avoid the subject. It was obviously his interest not to disagree with those with whom he had been so long connected, and more especially at this moment when it was believed in consequence of words which fell from the King on the dispute with Russia, that they were likely to come into power.* He had already explicitly declared his intention to separate from the dearest friends he possessed who should give countenance to the revolutionary doctrines then afloat; and the breach with Mr. Sheridan proved that this was no idle threat. He doubtless felt displeased that his general opinions should be, if not misrepresented at least so far misapplied as to become the means of charging him with dereliction of principle. He might be angry that this should be done by one who had long been his friend, and who boasted even at the moment that he was his disciple. He could not be well pleased that this disciple should condemn his book without ceremony as an attack on all free governments. He could not be highly conciliated by that friend withdrawing, as had been the case for a few preceding years, much of that public confidence which he had hitherto reposed in him. For as no similarity existed in their private pursuits, they were political friends or they were nothing; and the withholding confidence on such subjects became in fact a tacit dissolution of the compact by which they had been united.

In addition, there were circumstances which rendered it scarcely possible they could continue on the same terms as before. The dispute was not about a private or trivial, but a great constitutional matter which superseded all minor

* Mr Fox had himself communicated to Burke a few days before a speech made by the King at the levee to the effect, that if the government could not be properly conducted by Mr. Pitt it might be done by others, for he was not wedded to him.

considerations,—not a familiar or speculative topic on which they might amicably differ, and pass on to the consideration of others on which they agreed; but one in its consequences involving the very existence of the state. It was a question wholly new. It was one which interested every man in the kingdom. It was constantly and progressively before the eyes of Parliament. It met the leaders at every turn in debate, and in some form or another mingled in every discussion of fact or principle. It was in itself full of difficulties, of jagged points and sharp angles, against which neither could rub without feeling some degree of irritation; and it was one on which from the first each seemed to have staked his whole reputation for political wisdom against the other; Mr. Fox, with all the enthusiasm of a generous and unwary man; Mr. Burke with the penetration of a profound philosopher and the calculating sagacity of a practical statesman. In support of their opinions both were quite as vehement as the case required; one pushing on or being pushed by Opposition, to apologize for the misdeeds of the French Revolution: the other outstripping the van of the Ministry, or rather leading it, in bitter reprobation. Constant contention, “hand to hand and foot to foot,” as Burke expressed his determination to contend, could lead especially with an old associate only to coldness; and from coldness to alienation, from alienation to dislike, the steps are few, and quick, and certain. A breach therefore sooner or later was inevitable. Whether it ought not to have taken place by degrees, and with less of publicity, is matter of opinion, and at best of little consequence. An open and decisive expression of his mind (to a fault) had hitherto characterized the Irish orator upon all occasions; and he probably thought the same mode of conduct now more honourable in itself, and more calculated to impress upon the country a sense of the magnitude of its danger, and the sincerity of his conviction that the danger was near.

All previous circumstances since April 15th, when the clamour of his own party prevented him replying to Mr. Fox, plainly intimated a rupture in the Whig ranks. The latter gentleman long afterwards regretted this imprudent proceeding of his supporters, saying that though the conflict between them might have been hotter and fiercer, it would probably have left no unpleasant feelings behind. In fact,

the next morning a general alarm at the consequences of this step spread through the party, and several conciliatory explanations and apologies were offered to Burke. Many who agreed in Fox's opinions did not hesitate to condemn him for imprudence in expressing them, though it was equally true that he had been urged to do so by others, and for not having already done so before, a few of the number had been tempted to say he was deficient in firmness. On the other hand Burke's personal friends, and the connexions of the Duke of Portland, though agreeing in his views, wished him to pass over the opinions and the challenges of Fox and Sheridan in silence. This he urged was impossible. He was willing to forget the total want of consideration and respect shown to him on recent occasions, as well as the abuse directed against his writings; yet in addition to these, without any overt act to cause such a proceeding, he had been thrice within a week pointedly dared to the discussion; and standing as he did, pledged to the House and to the country upon the subject, it would look like political cowardice to shrink from the contest. Besides, he thought Mr. Fox's opinions of weight in the country, and should not be permitted to circulate unopposed. He felt further impelled, by an imperious sense of public duty, which he considered paramount to all other considerations whatever.

While intimation was received toward the middle or end of April, that the adherents of the Whig leader had determined to interrupt him on any allusions to French affairs, that gentleman himself in company with a friend, waited upon him to request that the discussion might be postponed till another opportunity, which Mr. Burke however pointed out was not likely to occur again during the Session. To convince Mr. Fox, nevertheless, that nothing personal or offensive should proceed from him, he stated explicitly what he meant to say, mentioning the heads of his arguments, and the limitations he designed to impose on himself; an instance of candour which Mr. Fox returned by relating the favourable expressions recently uttered of him by the King. The interview, therefore, though not quite satisfactory, excited no angry feelings. On the contrary, they walked down to the House together, and entered it, but found that the Quebec government bill had been postponed till after the Easter holidays. But as if fated to fan the slumbering flame of

dissension, Mr. M. A. Taylor observed on this evening that the constitution of that colony had been improperly treated, by involving the consideration of the general principles of government, and the constitutions of other countries. Insinuations had been thrown out against the opinions of some of the gentlemen with whom he acted. If, therefore, he found the minister, or *any other right honourable gentleman*, wander from the strict discussion of the matter, he should call him to order and take the sense of the House upon it. The allusion to Burke was palpable and so he considered it, but made no reply.

Mr. Fox, with more consideration, admitted that in forming a government for a colony, attention should be paid to the general principles of all governments. He himself had alluded perhaps too often, to the French Revolution. He had also spoken much on the government of the American States because they were in the vicinity of Canada; but on the Quebec bill he had only uttered one silly levity,* not worth recollection, relative to the French Revolution; he meant an allusion to the extinction of nobility in France and its revival in Canada. He was not in the habit of concealing his opinions; neither did he retract any which he had heretofore advanced on that subject; and when the Quebec bill came again to be discussed, though from the respect he entertained for some of his friends he should be sorry to differ from them, yet he would deliver his opinions fearlessly. Mr. Powys remarked that the debate had turned irregularly both on retrospect and anticipation, and hinted that Mr. Fox should have followed the example of Mr. Burke, in writing, rather than in speaking there, of the French Revolution.

Mr. Burke, in an affecting manner assured the House that nothing depressed him more—nothing had ever more affected body and mind—than the thought of meeting his friend as a direct antagonist. After noticing allusions thrown out and the accompanying observations, he considered that in framing a new constitution, it was desirable to refer to various forms of government and examples of other constitutions in order to see to what extent certain principles had been

* This was, that “nobility stunk in the nostrils of the people of America.” The phrase itself was not original, but had been used by Burke many years before applied to a former unpopular House of Commons.

adopted elsewhere, and how they had succeeded or were likely to succeed. His opinions on government he presumed not to be unknown. Gentlemen had become fond of quoting him in that House; and the more he considered the French Constitution, the more sorry he was to see it viewed with any degree of favour. Once in the preceding session he had thought himself under the necessity of speaking very fully upon the subject; *but since that time he had never mentioned it either directly or indirectly; no man therefore could charge him with having provoked the conversation that had passed.* He should, however, give his opinion on particular principles of government in the future progress of the Quebec bill. He acquitted with much candour his right honourable friend of any personal offence in the interruption he had lately experienced (April 15), in attempting to answer his recent panegyric on France: and he finished by saying, that should he and that friend differ, he desired it to be recollected that however dear he considered his friendship, there was something still dearer in his mind—the love of his country. Neither was he stimulated to the part he should take by any connexion with people in office; for whatever they knew of his political sentiments they had learned from him, not he from them.

Such were the precursors of this political storm. All the party elements had for some time appeared surcharged with combustible matter which required but a spark in order to explode, and this the unwise members supplied. Our surprise is chiefly excited by the strange delusion that Burke, whose decision of character and determination to carry through any thing he had once taken in hand could admit of no mistake, should be expected to submit to their arbitrary decree of silence. No infatuation could be greater. Of all men in the House they ought to have known that he was the last to be turned from any purpose which he thought public duty required; his conviction of being right was the result as they knew of long and anxious consideration. Mr. Fox, as we have seen, had given the challenge, yet was evidently in dread of the catastrophe that ensued, while his retainers proceeding a point further resolved that if intimidation could succeed there should be no contest. The preceding observations of Burke evinced a resolute though conciliatory spirit; the friends of Fox thought proper angrily to resent this determination; and during the interval between this period and the 6th of

May, plain intimations found vent in the Opposition newspapers that he should not be permitted to proceed in his purpose.

All this was clearly impolitic ; the conduct of the body in the whole affair, harsh if not hostile. That of Mr. Fox it is also difficult to explain. In treating of a constitution for a colony which embraced English and French interests, it was scarcely out of order to contrast their respective constitutions with that of the one proposed ; but it seemed strange that the same privilege should be denied to another member of at least equal talents and of the same party, because he drew a different conclusion. Why, it was pertinently asked, should Mr. Fox and Mr. Sheridan have license to extol the French revolution or constitution when speaking upon the Quebec bill, while to Mr. Burke, the topic of France should be forbidden ? Surprise likewise arose that the former should profess such warm admiration of the French revolution, when confessedly not one beneficial result had arisen from it, or seemed likely to arise, to that or to any other country. If this admiration were sincere, what conclusions could be drawn from his political wisdom or prudence ? If it were not, the inference was equally against his political honesty. It is no more than justice to him to state however that what he panegyrised in the gross, he condemned almost uniformly in detail ; and more in private conversation than he could be brought to express in debate. It is on record likewise that though on two occasions he applauded the new French *Constitution* as "the most stupendous and glorious edifice of liberty which had been erected on the foundation of human integrity in any time or country," he afterwards when pushed by Mr. Burke, explained away his meaning by saying that it applied to the revolution,—not to the Constitution. His sentiments seemed more than once to waver as to the line of conduct most fitting for him to pursue. It has been always believed that he was urged on by sinister influence, or that innate passion for popularity he always avowed, to take the side he did ; and that having irrecoverably lost Burke by going too far, he was obliged to go further in order to retain Sheridan, who is said to have exacted explicit declaration of his opinions as the price of his continued exertions in Parliament. It has been asserted by some of the Members who continued to adhere to him—that he would ultimately have been brought

over to Burke's views had not the precipitate separation of the latter affected his pride; for that after the publicity of the quarrel if he should relinquish his opinions in order to effect a reconciliation, it would look so much like weakness as to lose him the lead in his party, if not in public esteem. It is likewise said that Burke himself expected to make a convert of him even after their disagreement. Yet to a distant observer, these sanguine conclusions were not at all probable. Mr. Fox knew, that by joining administration he must become a secondary personage to Mr. Pitt, who could not be expected voluntarily to surrender half of that power which he enjoyed as a whole. While on the other hand, by not accepting office but merely showing himself in Parliament to re-echo the voice of Ministry, or by seceding altogether from business, he equally ran the hazard of losing something of his public importance. There was the further consideration whether even if admitted to an equality of power, it was probable he and Mr. Pitt should agree in their general measures. A calculation of these chances, and perhaps a real belief of serving the cause of liberty by remaining at the head of Opposition, determined him to keep his station. Far be it from my wish to "lean upon the memory of a great man;" but simple justice to another still greater, requires that an impartial statement should be opposed to misrepresentations still applied to him in consequence of this schism, by certain unscrupulous admirers of Mr. Fox, the rival leader of the Whigs.*

* This has been even very recently repeated. The passage in the text was printed nearly thirty years ago, and the circumstances of the rupture fully known and recognized as historical facts since 1791. I was surprised therefore to see a random contradiction of the account from Lord Holland in "Memoirs of the Whig Party," in the following few unceremonious and unsupported words—"Nothing can be more false than the account of that memorable debate in Prior's Life of Burke." I might rest content with the remarks of the able writer in the Quarterly Review (No. CLXXXI. June, 1852) in refuting this, as he has done so many more, of that Nobleman's random statements; but something more may be due to the reader. His Lordship does not venture to give any account himself or from any of his friends, of what he presumed or knew of the actual circumstances of the quarrel. He does not even hint in what point mine is erroneous. In truth he could not do so without being guilty of mis-statement. The detail was carefully drawn up after the perusal of several accounts more or less full, written immediately after the occurrence, and could no more be falsified, were there any such design, than any memorable event in the House of Commons of the present day. It was corroborated by Mr. Haviland Burke from many details given by his mother then resident with her uncle, who

An anecdote of this memorable evening related by a Member who had adopted Mr. Fox's opinions, evinces, contrary to the inference he draws, that Burke instead of displaying the calmness of one who had come down to the House prepared for a rupture, felt the irritation which unpremeditated quarrels, and the harsh reception he had experienced, were calculated to excite.

"The most powerful feelings," says Mr. Curwen,* "were

had heard numerous particulars from him and his visitors at Beaconsfield at the period of the occurrence. It was confirmed verbally and in written details by Dr. Walker King, afterwards Bishop of Rochester and Editor of Burke's Works. And it was further confirmed by a very full report, occupying the whole of the paper to the exclusion of other subjects, of the journal especially devoted to Mr. Fox, the *Morning Chronicle*. No modern event can be more accurately verified. The interrupters of Burke were in succession Mr. Baker, Mr. M. A. Taylor, Mr. St. John, Mr. Anstruther, twice, Mr. Grey supported by Sheridan, twice, Mr. St. John again, Lord Sheffield with a vote of censure seconded by Fox, in a speech in which he declared his and his right honourable friend's opinions on the French Revolution were "wide as the Poles asunder," and that it was "one of the greatest and happiest events of which history bore any record," and finally by Mr. Grey. The latter occurred after Burke had said that with several differences of opinion with Fox, nothing hitherto had interrupted their friendship. This drew forth the appeal of the latter in a speech filling five columns of the newspaper. Lord Holland was an agreeable and hospitable man, who had tact enough to cultivate literary society. But he was deficient in judgment, in research, in discrimination, in accuracy as an annalist, and warped by extreme prejudices, commonly unfounded and often absurd. He was no more fitted to sit down to the composition of accurate history, than to write Epic Poems. And the consciousness of this defect, probably induced him to neglect embodying the ample materials he possessed into a life of his uncle, which have thence passed into the more skilled hands of Lord John Russell.

Of his unfairness, if not hatred, towards Burke, we have a still newer specimen in the fifth volume of Moore's "*Memorials and Correspondence*."—"Asked Lord Holland several questions about Burke, suggested to me by reading Prior's life of Burke. Burke very anxious (Lord Holland says) for the Coalition. Fifty-four Articles of impeachment against Fox were written by Burke *before* the separation. In his '*History of the English Colonies*,' Burke suggested (Lord Holland thinks) American taxation. Burke always a jobber." Every point in this passage is untrue—some so notoriously contrary to fact as to be obvious to a cursory reader of modern history—but they shew the idle assertions in which his Lordship was accustomed to indulge equally in speech and in writing. Of the alleged jobbing propensities of Burke, every account of his proceedings or opinions in every session he sat in Parliament, is a sufficient refutation; and some of the compliments paid to him by opponents and friends on the score of disinterestedness will be found in this work.—Should the reader desire further details of the dispute between him and Fox, a full account will be found in the *Annual Register* for 1791.

* *Travels in Ireland*, vol. ii.

manifested on the adjournment of the House. Whilst I was waiting for my carriage, Mr. Burke came up to me and requested, as the night was wet, I would set him down—I could not refuse—though I confess I felt a reluctance in complying. As soon as the carriage door was shut, he complimented me on my being no friend to the revolutionary doctrines of the French, on which he spoke with great warmth for a few minutes, when he paused to afford me an opportunity of approving the view he had taken of those measures in the House. Former experience had taught me the consequences of differing from his opinions; yet at the moment I could not feel disinclined to disguise my sentiments. Mr. Burke, catching hold of the check-string, furiously exclaimed, ‘You are of these people! set me down!’ With some difficulty I restrained him;—we had then reached Charing Cross—a silence ensued, which was preserved till we reached his house in Gerrard Street, when he hurried out of the carriage without speaking, and thus our intercourse ended.” Yet when his own personal and political interests were at stake, he displayed nothing of this spirit of irritation, as the following anecdote recorded by the same gentleman testifies, and it is only one among many others:—“On the first question of the Regency I differed from Mr. Fox: when the division was proceeding, Mr. Burke espied me remaining in my seat: he turned about and repeatedly called on me, but as I obeyed not the summons, a laugh at his expense ensued. Though evidently displeased, I must do him the justice to say he did not resent it.”

The House meeting again on the 11th, Mr. Fox explained away his opinions against aristocracy; which Pitt sarcastically said he was glad to hear, for he and most others had formed a different estimate of his meaning from what had fallen from him on the evening they had last assembled. Mr. Burke spoke at length on the situation in which he stood with his party. Mr. Fox again assailed him with some censures and personalities, at the same time saying that if he wished to return to his party, it would receive, respect, and love him as heretofore. Of this censure and invitation little notice was taken, no attempt being made to recriminate; so that in the whole of this affair the loss of temper would seem to have been quite as great in the one gentleman as in the other. To Burke, decided separation from his late associates may have been more a relief than annoyance. He now stood alone

between the two great parties—unallied to one, and experiencing little less than hostility from the other in whose service his political life had been spent. Private uneasiness was added to extreme anxiety for public interests, which largely occupied his mind and even affected his health. “I am not well, Speaker,” said he approaching the chair of the House of Commons one evening,—“I eat too much, I drink too much, and I sleep very little.”* Some time after the final rupture with his former party he quoted in Mr. Addington’s hearing,

“*Æneas celsa in puppi, jam certus eundi
Carpebat somnos.*”

And again when assailed by interruptions from its inferior retainers gave the passage from *King Lear*—

“The little dogs and all, Tray, Blanche, and Sweetheart,
See—they bark at me.”

Not the least remarkable event of the period was the very next measure brought forward by Mr. Fox. This, while often in the habit of dropping hints upon inconsistency, seemed calculated to render his own more particularly marked, as in the late quarrel allusions occurred to difference of opinion with Burke on this very point—to whom in fact, the present undertaking was a strong though unavowed acknowledgment of the superiority of his views at an early period of his life, on a great constitutional matter. This was the bill for empowering juries to try the questions both of law and of fact in prosecutions for libel.

It has been noticed that a bill for this purpose was introduced by Mr. Dowdeswell in March 1771, in consequence of the discussions which arose from the verdict of the Jury in Almon’s trial for publishing Junius’s Letter to the King. This measure Mr. Burke as the moving spirit of the party, not only suggested but drew up with his own hand, and supported in the House by an able speech. Ministry resisted it, and among others Mr. Fox pointedly. Lord Shelburne and his friends gave it a hollow support; Lord Chatham and his followers, scouted it; and Mr. Horne Tooke attacked it anonymously in the newspapers; yet all these persons formed sections of Opposition—so much were the judgment and constitutional tendencies of the Irish orator even then in advance of his ablest contemporaries. This ungracious re-

* Lord Sidmouth’s Life, vol. i.

ception probably prevented him from renewing it. Mr. Fox at the present moment, seized upon the question perhaps as a prop to falling popularity; and though it be an understood rule for one Member of Parliament before he seizes upon the proposition of another to communicate with him on the subject, Mr. Fox did not think this compliment necessary, although no breach had then (February) taken place between them. He said nothing to Mr. Burke, made no apology or reference, acknowledged no obligation; but adopted the spirit and substance, and as nearly as possible the words of the bill of 1771, as his own exclusive property.* It is difficult to believe he did not know who the real author was, though ignorance on that point was possible; but the bill itself from having opposed, and from his late reference to it, he could not have

* For the information of the reader the chief heads of each are subjoined.

Jury Bill of 1771.

I. Whereas doubts and controversies have arisen concerning the rights of the Jurors to try the whole matter charged in indictments, and informations for seditious and other libels; for settling and clearing the same in time to come, be it enacted, &c. that from and after, &c., the jurors who shall be duly impanelled and sworn to try the issue between the King and the defendant, upon any indictment or information for a seditious libel, or a libel under any other denomination or description, shall, to all intents and purposes, be held and reputed in law and in right, competent to try every part of the matter laid or charged in the said indictment or information, comprehending the criminal intention of the defendant, and evil tendency of the libel charged, as well as the mere fact of the publication thereof; and the application by inuendo of blanks, initial letters, pictures, and other devices, any law or usage to the contrary notwithstanding.

II. Provided that nothing in the act be construed to prevent or restrain the judges or justices before whom such issues shall be tried, from instructing the jurors concern-

Jury Bill of 1791.

I. Whereas doubts have arisen, whether on the trial of an indictment or information for the making or publishing any libel, where an issue or issues are joined between the King and the defendant or defendants, on the plea of not guilty pleaded, it be competent to the jury impanelled to try the same, to give their verdict upon the whole matter in issue; be it therefore declared and enacted, &c. &c., that on every such trial, the jury sworn to try the issue may give a general verdict of guilty or not guilty upon the whole matter put in issue upon such indictment or information, and shall not be required or directed by the Court or Judge before whom such indictment or information shall be tried, to find the defendant or defendants guilty, merely on the proof of the publication by such defendant or defendants, of the paper charged to be a libel, and of the sense ascribed to the same on such indictment or information.

II. Provided always, that on every such trial the court or judge before whom such indictment or information shall be tried, shall, according to their or his discretion

forgotten. Whatever merit therefore be in this measure, far the larger proportion beyond all question belongs to Mr. Burke.

The labours of the latter at the commencement of this troubled session had been equally arduous, though less personally agitating than those towards its close. An important constitutional question was mooted, whether the impeachment had not abated by the dissolution of Parliament in 1790? He maintained with great vigour and ability that it had not. Mr. Fox and Mr. Pitt (who met privately for the last time in consultation on this subject, and the only time since 1783), Mr. Dundas, Mr. Addington the Speaker, Mr. Adam, and the chief talent of both Houses supported the same views. Nearly all the lawyers were of an opposite opinion and among them Mr. Erskine, who laboured hard to support this unconstitutional doctrine. The attempt drew from the chief manager many sarcastic remarks, especially after Erskine, who had been retained in a cause on the other side, and was of course not free from bias, had remarked that the Lawyers were not *at home* in that House; when Burke said, he be-

ing the law upon the matter so in issue, as fully as may be done in other misdemeanors, where the jurors do and ought to try the whole matter; nor to restrain the jurors from finding the matter special, if the law to them shall seem difficult and doubtful.

III. Provided also, that nothing herein contained shall be construed to take from the defendant, after verdict found, the right of laying such evidence before the Court in which such verdict was found, as may tend to mitigation or extenuation of his said offence, as has been usually practised before this act.

give their or his opinion of directions to the jury on the matter in issue between the King and the defendant or defendants, in like manner as in other criminal cases.

III. Provided also, that nothing herein contained shall extend or be construed to extend, to prevent the jury from finding a special verdict in their discretion, as in other criminal cases.

IV. Provided also, that in case the jury shall find the defendant or defendants guilty, it shall and may be lawful for the said defendant or defendants to move in arrest of judgment on such ground and in such manner as by law he or they might have done before the passing of this act, any thing herein to the contrary notwithstanding.

lieved they were not—"They were birds of a different feather, and only perched in that House on their flight to another—only resting their pinions there for a while, yet ever fluttering to be gone to the region of coronets; like the Hibernian in the ship, they cared not how soon she foundered, because they were only passengers—their best bower anchor was always cast in the House of Lords." In another sentence he expressed a wish "to see the country governed by law, but not by lawyers." On the 14th of February when Erskine, who had already sustained many biting sarcasms, complained of the length of the trial, Burke, after an able defence of the managers upon whom no blame rested in the opinions either of Ministry or Opposition, asked "whether the learned gentleman remembered, that if the trial had continued three, the oppressions had continued for 20 years? Whether, after all, there were hour-glasses for measuring the grievances of mankind? or whether those whose ideas never travelled beyond a *nisi prius* cause, were better calculated to ascertain what ought to be the length of an impeachment, than a rabbit who breeds six times in a year was to judge of the time proper for the gestation of an elephant?" Mr. Fox was not less severe in strictures upon the legal profession.

The other measures in which he took part were by an eloquent speech, seconded by Fox and Pitt, in support of Mr. Mitford's bill granting indulgence to protesting Roman Catholic Dissenters, or those who denied the Pope's supremacy in temporal matters; on the slave trade; on the Russian armament; and an eloquent one (May 12th) on Mr. Grey's motion to inquire into the effects of imprisonment for debt—a practice to which his humane propensities were at all times alive; and the legislature of the present day by passing the Insolvent Act has fully adopted his ideas.

In the early part of the summer he paid a visit to Margate for the benefit of warm salt-water baths for Mrs. Burke, at which an anecdote is related indicative of his sense of propriety in matters delivered from the pulpit. At church, on one occasion, he was unexpectedly saluted with a political sermon, which though complimentary to his own views of public affairs, was so little suited in his opinion to the place, that he displayed unequivocal symptoms of disapprobation by rising frequently during its continuance, taking his hat as if to depart, and reseating himself with an air of evident

impatience. "Surely," said he, on another occasion, "the church is a place where one day's truce may be allowed to the dissensions and animosities of mankind."

During the stay of the family here, his niece Miss French, relates an instance of the knowledge of small things possessed by her uncle being unexpectedly put to the test. A ball being to take place at the rooms, the ladies who had been little in public in consequence of Mrs. Burke's indisposition, became anxious to ascertain the prevailing colours and modes in what was then a fashionable resort, but were puzzled to find a fit messenger to dispatch upon this important errand. Mr. Burke overhearing the conversation, immediately removed the difficulty by jocularly offering himself as *Embassador extraordinary* on the occasion; and when he found that much merriment was excited by the proposal, and some remarks made upon his unfitness for a mission requiring a special knowledge of caps, dresses, flounces, tuckers, and all the paraphernalia of female dress, good-humouredly replied, "Come, come, I know more of these things than you give me credit for; my knowledge must not be undervalued until it is tried." To the rooms accordingly he went duly instructed by the ladies, made his remarks according to instructions, and returned with a humorous and as it proved correct account of all he had observed.

Another rather unusual incident savoured more of the mystery frequently attached to the proceedings of a statesman. M. De Calonne, then in England, who had become agent or minister for the French Princes at Coblenz, conceived the design of privately consulting Mr. Burke on their interests and that of the French monarchy. With this view he proceeded to Margate, and left an anonymous letter at Burke's residence requesting a private interview, so that the visit should be unknown to the French Embassy. This was at first refused. Further explanations being given, a meeting took place as desired, and the result was a mission of the younger Burke, as the representative of his father's opinions and views on the great question then agitating Europe to Coblenz, with the approbation of Government. "We did not discover the real purpose of this mystery," said one of the ladies many years afterward, "for some time, but supposed it was something connected with France."

In August Sir Joshua Reynolds published a print of him, by Benedetti, from the best portrait painted by himself in

1775. Underneath, the President caused to be engraved the following lines from the fifth book of *Paradise Lost*—the conduct of the good Abdiel; a strong allusion, to the recent political quarrel, and expressive of his own sense of the proceedings of Opposition, as well as of their treatment of his great friend—

“So spake the fervent Angel, but his zeal
None seconded, as out of season judged,
Or singular and rash ————— unmoved,
Unshaken, unseduced, unterrified
His loyalty he kept, his love, his zeal;
Nor number nor example with him wrought
To swerve from truth, or change his constant mind
Though single. From amidst them forth he passed
Long way through hostile scorn, which he sustain'd
Superior nor of violence fear'd aught;
And with retorted scorn his back he turn'd
On those proud towers to swift destruction doom'd.”

His humility, which if really unaffected, was as distinguished as any other of his qualities took the alarm on this occasion, not having seen the plate until a considerable number of impressions had been worked off, and he then urged the strongest remonstrances against the application of such lines to him; insisting as the condition of continued friendship that they should be obliterated, or the plate and all the impressions which had not been distributed, destroyed. Sir Joshua submitted to this determination with great reluctance, and it was so unrelentingly carried into effect that very few are now to be found. So far did Burke carry this feeling, squeamish or affected as some may consider it, that whenever he met with one of these prints in the house of a friend, he used to beg it as a favour in exchange for one without the lines, and it was no sooner obtained than destroyed.

At this period also, the war of caricatures which had been carried on against him for many years with some wit and address as well as against Fox and others of the Opposition, now turned in some degree in his favour. The Jesuit's dress, by which and his spectacles he had been commonly represented, was exchanged for other forms in which he was drawn as confounding or exposing in debate the apologists of the Revolution. A collection of these fleeting memorials of the whim or satire of the day, made by Mr. Haviland Burke, affords some amusing scenes in his career, the like-

ness being as faithful as caricature pretends to be, and some of his oratorical attitudes have been correctly caught. This pictorial wit even when most hostile, far from inflicting pain, frequently became a source of amusement, as the following anecdote will testify. Dining at Lord Tankerville's, the conversation turning on caricatures, a gentleman remarked that he believed Mr. Fox had been oftener exhibited in that way than any other man in the kingdom—"I beg pardon," said Mr. Burke, "but I think I may put in my claim to a greater number and variety of exhibitions in that line than my honourable friend." "I hope," observed Mr. Fox, "they give you no uneasiness." "Not in the least," was the reply, "I have I believe, seen them all, laughed at them all, and pretty well remember them all; and if you feel inclined to be amused and it would not be trespassing on the indulgence of the company, I can repeat the different characters in which I have figured in the shops, obedient to the powers of the pencil." Accordingly he began, and detailed them all so humourously as to keep the table in continual laughter during the description.

CHAPTER XII.

Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs—French Emigrants—Letter to Mr. (now Baron) Smith—Writings on French Affairs, and on the Roman Catholic Claims—Sir Joshua Reynolds—Parliamentary Business—Letter on the Death of Mr. Shackleton—War with France—Letter of Mr. R. Burke, Jun. to Mr. Smith.

HIS early friend Shackleton, having visited London in the spring, to attend meetings of the Friends' Society, usually spent as has been said, a portion of time at Butler's Court or in town. The following note was dispatched this year as soon as his arrival was known.

"My dear Shackleton,—I shall be most happy to see you. My wife will be in town on this day; at least I hope so. Why can't you dine with us also? I have refused two invitations this morning to keep myself for you. Yours, most truly,
EDMUND BURKE."

"Friday.

About a week after the rupture with Mr. Fox, a broad intimation in the Morning Chronicle conveyed the wish of

the party that he should retire from Parliament.* This being deemed gratuitous impertinence, caused the withdrawal of his name from the Whig Club. He had, however, previously expressed the wish to seek private life as soon as the proceedings against Hastings permitted an honourable retreat. But as the hint in the newspaper paragraph hinged upon the purer Whiggism of his great opponent, an answer was deemed necessary to test the alleged correct principles of that day, with those maintained at the Revolution, the era of their supposed greatest purity.

For this purpose appeared toward the middle of summer, "An Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs." In this pamphlet, which is couched in a calm tone and written in the third person, he successfully accomplishes the purpose of proving that his doctrines were in accordance with the allowed standard of correctness; and that from these he had not swerved. He defends his conduct in the recent dispute, with moderation of manner and a statement of circumstances, simple, and in themselves undeniable. He maintains his consistency as one of the most valuable parts of his public character, and retraces the general complexion of his exertions, as well as the words made use of on several important occasions, in order to prove their conformity with those advanced in that work (the *Reflections*) which the party had taken so much pains to condemn. "He proposed, he says, to prove that the present state of things in France is not a transient evil, productive, as some have too favourably represented it, of a lasting good, but that the present evil is only the means of producing future and (if that were possible) worse evils. That it is not an undigested, imperfect, and crude scheme of liberty, which may gradually be mellowed and ripened into an orderly and social freedom, but that it is so fundamentally wrong as to be utterly incapable of correcting itself by any length of time, or of being formed into any mode of polity of which a member of the House of Commons could publicly declare his approbation." The decisive boldness of this and many similar predictions and their sub-

* May 12, 1791—"The great and firm body of the Whigs of England, true to their principles, have decided on the dispute between Mr. Fox and Mr. Burke; and the former is declared to have maintained the pure doctrines by which they are bound together, and upon which they have invariably acted. The consequence is that Mr. Burke retires from Parliament."

sequent exact fulfilment, will often astonish the reader in the writings of this extraordinary man.

The king and chief ministers took an opportunity of expressing their approval of the work. He writes to his son—"I was at the levee yesterday, as the rule is, when the king sends you a civil message. Nothing could be more gracious than my reception. He told me that he did not think any thing could be added to what I had first written, but he saw he was mistaken; there was very much added, and new, and important, and what was most material, what could not be answered." Lords Fitzwilliam and Camden, Sir William Scott, and others expressed their warm approval; and his old friend Lord Charlemont disagreeing on some points while applauding others, writes in a most affectionate strain—"Though I admired you as the first of writers, though I love you as the best of men, though there be not a word even in your first pamphlet which does not if possible increase my admiration for your genius and my love for your heart, &c." The *old Whig* party while privately commending the work, preserved silence in public—probably from delicacy to their nominal chief. Burke writes to his son in the middle of August—"Not one word from one of our party. They are secretly galled. They agree with me to a tittle; but they dare not speak out for fear of hurting Fox. As to me, they leave me to myself; they see that I can do myself justice. Dodsley is preparing a third edition."

Few things affected his sensibility more at this period, than the hordes of emigrants driven from opulence and respectability in their native country, to poverty and obscurity in this, by means of the secret menace or open violence of the sanguinary characters who exercised authority in a large portion of France. For the relief of the poorer class, besides giving as much in the way of relief as his own means permitted, he exerted his influence in raising private subscriptions among his friends, by appeals to the public soon afterward, and eventually by applications to government. To others of higher rank, his house and table were open until a more permanent residence could be secured; and in performing this work of Christian beneficence it should be mentioned to his honour that some of the pecuniary difficulties with which he had to struggle, were incurred. A late writer (Mr. Charles Butler,) gives the following account of

the almost daily levees of Mr. Burke, to these unfortunate persons, at which he was present:—

“Some time in the month of August, 1794, the reminiscant called on that great man, and found him, as he usually was at this time, surrounded by many of the French nobility and haranguing with great eloquence on the horrors of the French revolution, and the general ruin with which it threatened every state in Europe. One of his hearers interrupted him by saying, with somewhat more of levity than suited either the seriousness of the subject, or the earnestness with which Mr. Burke was expressing himself—“*Mais enfin, Monsieur, quand est ce que nous retournerons dans la France ?*” “*Jamais*”—was Mr. Burke’s answer.—It was a word of woe: he pronounced it in a very impressive manner, and it evidently appalled the whole audience. After a short silence, during which his mind appeared to be labouring with something too big for utterance—“*Messieurs,*” he exclaimed, “*les fausses espérances ne sont pas une monnaie, que j’ai dans mon tiroir:—dans la France vous ne retournerez jamais.*” “*Quoi donc,*” cried one of the audience, “*ces coquins !*” “*Coquins !*” said Mr. Burke, “*ils sont coquins ; mais ils sont les coquins les plus terribles que le monde a connu !*”—“It is most strange,” he then said in the English language—“I fear I am the only person in France or England who is aware of the extent of the danger with which we are threatened.” “But,” said the Reminiscant, wishing to prolong the interesting conversation, “the Duke of Brunswick is to set all right.”—“The Duke of Brunswick !” exclaimed Mr. Burke—“the Duke of Brunswick to do any good ! A war of posts to subdue France !”—Another silence.—“*Ce qui me désespère de plus,*” he then said—“*est que quand je plane dans l’hémisphère politique je ne vois guères une tête ministérielle à la hauteur des circonstances.*”

Among his visitors from France about this time was the celebrated Madame de Genlis, who with her suite took up their abode for a short time at Butler’s Court, and of whom the following anecdotes became current in the family. Her chamberlain as soon as he had secured a footing in the house, communicated that Madame la Comtesse could not sleep if the least portion of light gained admission into her bed-room. The darkest was therefore appropriated to her use, but this would not do ; the shutters were fitted afresh to exclude the

rays of morning, but in vain ; thick window-curtains were superadded to no purpose ; dense bed-curtains closely drawn added another defence, but all ineffectually ; for the light was, or was said to be, still intrusive.—A carpenter was at length added to the establishment, whose business it was every evening to nail up blankets against every crevice by which it was possible for a ray of light to enter, and in the morning to remove them—and this remedy, happily for the peace of the house and the slumbers of the lady, proved effectual.

Madame, however, did not prove so great a favourite with some of the friends of her distinguished host as was expected. Her great ambition or failing, was to do, or be thought to do, every thing ; to possess a universal genius in mind and in mechanical powers beyond the attainments of her own or even of the other sex. A ring which she wore of curious, indeed exquisite workmanship, having attracted the notice of Sir Joshua Reynolds at Butler's Court, he inquired by what good fortune it had been acquired, and received for answer that it was executed by herself. Sir Joshua stared, but made no reply. "I have done with her,"—said he the first time he was alone with Mr. Burke afterwards—"to have the assurance to tell *me* such a tale ! Why, my dear Sir, it is an antique ;—no living artist in Europe can equal it "

One of the pleasing results derived by the subject of our memoir from his literary and parliamentary exertions against the wild politics of the day, was the reasonable train of thought which they tended to excite or to confirm in young men of superior talents and station in life, or intended for the liberal professions. Of these, some might in time be expected to possess authority in the state, and thus through his instrumentality become the future safeguards of the constitution. His disciples indeed soon became numerous, in effect and substance at least, if not in name. From several he received testimonies of respect and admiration, such as were gratifying to age to receive, and honourable to youth to pay.

Among others was Mr., afterwards Sir William, Smith and one of the Barons of the Exchequer in Ireland, son of Sir Michael Smith, Master of the Rolls in that country, who educated at Christ Church, Oxford, learned there to estimate at their due value the merits of his eminent countryman. To fight therefore under his banners became almost a matter of course. Though young, he had not suffered himself to be

misled by those illusive speculations promulgated under the name of liberty, so well calculated to impose upon youth; and though a man of talent, he did not deem it necessary to display that fashion of it which waywardly runs counter to the opinions of the aged, the observant, and the wise of his own time. Possessing a spirit too active to remain neuter or idle in the conflict then raging with what were considered republican principles, he enlisted as an author militant against them, and produced several pieces which attracted considerable notice. One of these, "The Rights of Citizens," he dedicated to Mr. Burke. Its main object was to insist upon what, in the enthusiasm of the moment, seemed to have been almost forgotten, the stability and value of men's social and civil rights, as contradistinguished from those precarious and fantastic ones which Paine had been contending for under the specious title of Rights of Man. The idea was well-timed; for something seemed requisite to sober men down from the heated contemplation of what was impracticable to grant or pernicious if obtained, to a juster estimate of the substantial good which they already enjoyed. In return for this dedication, the writer received a letter from him at Spa, in which we find his opinion of two writers, who once occupied no small share of public attention, marked by his usual discernment. At this period the Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs was in the press. "You talk of *Paine* with more respect than he deserves. He is utterly incapable of comprehending his subject. He has not even a moderate portion of learning of any kind. He has learned the instrumental part of literature; a *style*, and a method of disposing of his ideas; without having even made a previous preparation of study, or thinking, for the use of it. *Junius*, and other sharply-penned libels of our time have furnished a stock to the adventurers in composition, which gives what they write an air (and but an air) of art and skill."*

On his return to England, Mr. Smith was invited to Butler's Court, and subsequently became the channel of communicating to the Irish people several opinions of his host on

* This passage, as Sir William Smith told me, always appeared to him decisive refutation of the conjecture that the Letters of *Junius* were written by Mr. Burke. That question as we have seen, is now fully settled in the negative.

their religious dissensions as bearing on their political condition. He was good enough to oblige me with the following reminiscences of one of his visits to his great correspondent.

"There was company in the house at the time, which when Mr. Smith arrived from town, had already sat down at dinner. He entered the dining-room in some measure unobserved, but found a seat at the foot of the table beside Mr. Richard Burke the younger, whose premature death in no very long time after, plunged his father into such deep affliction; and with whom nearer advances to intimacy were made during the evening than the short period of their acquaintance gave room to expect. This would seem to disprove an assertion sometimes made by persons who saw him but little, or whom he might not possibly like, that his habits to a stranger were so reserved as to present an obstacle to intimacy. The guests present were rather numerous. Among them were M. Cazales, a distinguished member of the first National Assembly of France, and unless the writer's memory deceives him, a Vicomte previous to the abolition of titles; and M. Dillon, reputed a favourite of the unfortunate Marie Antoinette of France, and commonly known by the appellation 'Le Beau Dillon.' These, at least the former more particularly, appeared to speak, or even to understand English, very imperfectly. Mr. Burke, consequently addressed much of his conversation to them in French; he did not seem to pronounce or speak it well, but was perfectly able to express himself intelligibly, and with reasonable fluency; and this was manifestly all that he aimed at. He appeared not merely above the vanity of attempting to make a display of proficiency, but also above the more excusable feeling of reluctance to betray his want of it. The revolutionary events which were then crowding upon the scene seemed very much to engross him, and naturally formed a considerable portion of his conversation.

"During dinner, a servant intimated to the host the arrival of Mr. Smith, on which he rose from the head of the table where he had been sitting, walked down to the latter, shook hands with and welcomed him, and then returned to his seat. In the manner in which this was done, there appeared to the writer of these recollections, a mixture of something

resembling formality, (or should it be called *vieille-cour* stateliness?) with hospitable feeling and frank good nature, of which he would not find it easy to convey a just idea to the reader. When the ladies appeared about to quit the room, Mr. Burke stopped them and went out himself. On his return in a minute or two, they retired. He had in the mean time it appeared been examining the degree of heat of the drawing-room, where thermometers were placed for the purpose of ascertaining the temperature with precision. Mrs. Burke was then in a delicate state of health, labouring as the writer apprehends, under a complaint of the rheumatic kind; and this was the cause of the affectionate and attentive precaution observed by her husband.

“Richard Burke, the brother of Edmund and Recorder of Bristol formed one of the company, and appeared to be a person of pleasantry, humour, and ready wit. The younger Richard, who however was not in very good health, seemed, if not diffident or reserved, at least disinclined to take part in the general conversation, and rather disposed to confine his communications to those more immediately about him, and to deliver his sentiments in an under tone of voice. The share of his conversation which he gave to Mr. Smith was considerable; and in its purport as well as quality, extremely gratifying to the latter. His health appeared delicate; a cold, to all appearance had taken fast hold of him, and fixed upon his chest. Both his father and mother betrayed anxiety on this subject, and might be said to have spoken *at* him, with reference to his declared intention of going next day to London. The weather, his cough, the little inconvenience which would arise from postponing for a few days his interview with Mr. Pitt, were in turn adverted to. He appeared to the writer of these recollections to cut short these parental anxieties and recommendations, by the at once careless and peremptory way in which he said, ‘I shall go, however;’ and in some time after, he suggested to one of the ladies the necessity of her having her commissions for town ready that night as he purposed to start early in the morning.

“In the course of the evening after the gentlemen had adjourned to the drawing-room, M. Cazales made, in his attempts to express himself in English, more and greater blunders than the writer could have expected. Some of these mistakes he conceives himself to recollect; but, as they

would be more *vrais* than *vraisemblables*, he thinks it as well not to record them. He seemed to have a desire to amuse and to excite laughter, and he succeeded.* Mr. Burke contributed an occasional smile to the general merriment, and nothing more: and even this was accompanied by a curl of the lip that appeared to doubt whether there was much good taste, whatever there might be of good humour, shown in the proceeding.

"Mr. Smith remained for a few days at the house of this eminent man, and repeated his visit more than once afterwards. So great a portion of time however has since elapsed, that he has forgotten much which deserved to be remembered and all of which he would desire to remember, could those bright but flitting thoughts and sentiments which make up the charm of conversation with a great genius, be always held fast by the memory, or transixed at once to paper. Some of the particular occasions also on which a part of what he still retains may have occurred, are in part forgotten. During one of these visits, a morning was devoted by Mr. Burke to walking round the grounds and vicinity with his visitor, discoursing with him upon agricultural subjects, evincing not only much apparent interest in, but as is well known to his friends, displaying much practical knowledge

* M. Cazales, who was a good-humoured man, with all the inclination to please and to be pleased, which is often characteristic of his country had picked up the air, and some of the words of the strange and not very intelligible or elegant old song called "*Peas upon a trencher!*" The words seemed to tickle his imagination, but not knowing them perfectly, he asked Mr. Smith to give them to him accurately. This that gentleman was unable to do, but wrote the following hasty paraphrase, or version, with a pencil on the back of a letter, both supplied by his amusing French friend. They answer the air very well—

"Garçon apportez moi, moi,
Des pois, de petits pois, pois;
Sucrés Monsieur?—C'est mieux, je crois;
Et l'assiette de bois, bois."

Several allusions to him as guest at Beaconsfield occur in Burke's correspondence. He had been an opponent of Mirabeau in the National Assembly, and bore so strong a resemblance to Mr. Fox as to be mistaken for him more than once in the streets. An anecdote told of his first visit to Burke afterwards proved a source of amusement to himself and Mrs. Haviland. He had often heard of *rost-bif* as an indispensable dish to all Englishmen, but with so little idea of its nature as to take up a slice of toast at breakfast and ask whether that was not the great staple of an English stomach of which he had heard so much?

of such matters. He talked likewise of Ireland, and seemed to think of it, and to recall the scenes of his early life with some tenderness of feeling. He pointed out the mansion which had belonged to the family of Penn; and either showed a house traditionally represented as having been inhabited by the poet Waller, or pointed at the church as containing his remains.*

“On the profession of the law which Mr. Smith contemplated, Mr. Burke made a variety of observations. So far he said, as his experience led to the forming of an opinion, he considered it as not calculated to develop the general, or higher powers of the mind,—an idea which he has likewise thrown out in the speech on American taxation when sketching the character of Mr. George Grenville. He sought to illustrate this view of the matter by some instances which it might be invidious, and does not seem necessary, to record. At the same time he did not seem wholly wedded to his theory;—said that very possibly it was an erroneous one; that even were it correct, there were several splendid exceptions to the rule; and that even in cases to which the rule applied, the pursuits and studies of the bar might sharpen the understanding on many points, and did, in fact, render its professors, as far as they permitted their faculties to expand, acute and penetrating. It assisted likewise to give some degree of logical precision to the mode of thinking; but the general effect, after all, was to reduce the mind from a wholesale to a retail dealer, in subordinate and petty topics of information. He added, that he understood the members of the Irish bar to be inferior in legal learning to their English brethren, but in other respects to possess some advantages. It is apprehended that a material change in this respect has since taken place; that the Irish bar may now compete with that of England in legal information; and that on the other hand, the former can no longer claim to superiority over the latter, on other grounds.

“It appeared to Mr. Smith, that there was nothing arrogant, peremptory, or dogmatical in the way in which Mr. Burke put forward his opinions, though such charges have been sometimes adduced against his mode of argumentation. Mr. Smith submitted a short tract to his perusal. Mr. Burke objected to the theory which a paragraph in it im-

* Waller's house still exists in the neighbourhood.

plied. The former immediately proposed in deference to such authority, to draw his pen across it, but was stopped by Mr. Burke, who said, 'Do not strike it out until I turn the matter more in my mind.' Next day he made a few changes and interlineations in the manuscript, and said that thus qualified, the theories of the paragraph might stand. These scenes occurred in the study at Butler's Court.

"Imperfect as these recollections may be deemed, and thrown together as they are with more haste than the writer could have desired, though prevented by momentary circumstances from devoting more time to their detail and arrangement, they may not be wholly without interest to those who delight in contemplating the great character to whom they relate—in the lines of Canning—

'—Lamented sage ! whose prescient scan,
Pierced through foul anarchy's gigantic plan,
Prompt to incred'lous hearers to disclose
The guilt of France, and Europe's world of woes—
Thou on whose name each distant age shall gaze,
The mighty sea-mark of these troubled days;
Oh ! large of soul, of genius unconfin'd,
Born to delight, instruct, improve mankind.'

Seldom were his intellectual energies more actively at work than in this year, in thinking, in debating, in private discussions, in writing, in corresponding, in imparting information to various parts of Europe, and in diligence in procuring it, of which the mission to Coblenz was only one instance. His letters alone, if fully collected, would form a considerable volume. Among persons thus favoured were Mr. Trevor, British Minister at Turin; Madame D'Osmonde, a lady of the Queen of France; Mr. (or Captain) Woodford, an agent in Paris; Chevalier Bintinnaye, relative of the Bishop of Auxerre; Chevalier Rivanol, an active Royalist in the South of France; the Marquis de Bouilliè, known as a military commander in the West Indies in the late war and who tried in vain to aid the escape of the king from Paris; his brother Richard; his son, who had started on his mission early in August, and returned at the end of September, to whom his letters were long and frequent; Lord Camden; Sir William Scott; Lord Auckland; Lord Charlemont; Duke of Dorset; sketch of a letter to the Queen of France; Mr. Hely Hutchinson; Monsieur, afterwards Louis XVIII.;

Lord Fitzwilliam; Mr. Dundas; Dr. Laurence; several relatives in Ireland; and Catherine of Russia. A summary of these would far exceed the limits due to biography; but they evince the workings of his mind on the great events passing before him, while he confesses and laments his inability to impress either on Opposition or on Ministry the certainty of those coming events which he alone, it appeared, clearly foresaw. Occasionally he dined with Mr. Dundas, Lord Grenville, Lord Hawkesbury, and Mr. Pitt—with the former on one occasion not a word of politics was mentioned all the evening—nor with the latter the slightest progress made in winning him over to his views. Lord Sidmouth, then speaker and close friend of the Minister, who formed one of a party of four toward the end of September 1791, thus tells an anecdote of the continued conviction of the head of the Government, that neither nor other danger was to be apprehended from France; “After dinner, Burke was earnestly representing the danger which threatened this country from the contagion of French principles, when Pitt said, ‘Never fear, Mr. Burke; depend on it we shall go on as we are till the day of judgment.’ ‘Very likely, sir,’ replied Mr. Burke; ‘it is the day of *no* judgment that I am afraid of.’” *

When eventually the junction of the Portland party with Ministry took place, Mr. Pitt asked several of the principal members to dine, among whom was Burke;—“As they rose from table,” said Lord Sidmouth, who was present, “after much desponding conversation on the gloomy aspect of public affairs, Mr. Burke, in an encouraging tone addressed to them the following line from the *Æneid* as his parting advice—

“*Durate, et vosmet rebus servate secundis.*”

In December, keeping his eye steadily fixed on the progress of the Revolution as the great centre of interest to a statesman, he drew up a paper, entitled, “*Thoughts on French Affairs*,” which was submitted to the private consideration of Ministry, and is marked by the same spirit of fore-knowledge as his other writings on this subject. He arrives at three conclusions, of which subsequent experience has taught us the truth—That no counter-revolution in France was to be expected from internal causes only; that the

* Life of Lord Sidmouth, vol. i.

longer the system existed the stronger it would become both within and without; and that while it did exist, the interest of the rulers of that country would be to disturb and distract all other governments.

The communication made to him from the Empress of Russia, through Count de Woronzow and Mr. Fawkener the British Minister already alluded to, produced in return a dignified and complimentary letter, dated from Beaconsfield, November the 1st, insinuating forcibly the necessity for Her Majesty adopting, by active exertion as well as by declaration, the cause of all Sovereigns, all churches, all nobility, and all society; that the debt due by her predecessors to Europe for civilizing a vast empire, should now be repaid by that empire to rescue Europe from the new barbarism. An air of doubt however pervades this letter as if he had some suspicion of her zeal in the cause; and if so, the result proved he did not mistake her character, as she did nothing and probably never meant to do any thing, against revolutionary France. Catherine, who possessed many of the qualities of a great Monarch, was the most selfish of politicians. To crime and selfishness in fact she owed her crown; and feeling that no danger to it existed among her own subjects where the first elements of freedom were unknown, she had not generosity enough to step forward and assist others in distress when there appeared no prospect of immediate profit from the exertion. The purpose of her communication to Mr. Burke, was probably to extract from him a letter of admiration and praise, being always ambitious of the notice of the great literary names of Europe; but in returning the courtesy due to a Sovereign and a woman, it may be questioned whether he did not inflict some violence on his inclination. Of her private character there could be but one opinion. To the general politics of her court as evinced towards Turkey and Poland, he was no greater friend; particularly in the business of the partition of the latter, of which he avowed that honest detestation which every man not a profligate politician, or robber by profession, must ever entertain.

The grievances of Irish Roman Catholics exciting increased discussion in that country, he was solicited to state to Ministry and to support, their claims for relaxation of the penal laws. His son also was appointed their agent, and

early in January 1792, proceeded to Ireland to influence their proceedings by such moderate counsels as might give effect to his father's exertions at home. Ere this took place, the latter had commenced writing the "*Letter to Sir Hercules Langrishe, Bart., M.P.*" as auxiliary to his son's mission. It bears date January 3rd, 1792, enforces the policy of removing the chief restrictions to which they were subject, particularly that which denied them the elective franchise, and appeals to the recollection of his friend whether his opinions upon the question were not as fully matured and as strongly expressed thirty-two years before (1760) as at that moment. So successful were his exertions, aided in part by those of other friends, that a bill was speedily introduced into the Irish Parliament by which the profession of the law hitherto interdicted to Roman Catholics became open to them; intermarriages with Protestants legalized; restraints upon their education, and the obstruction to arts and manufactures shewn in limiting the number of apprentices to masters of that persuasion, removed. Next year (1793) solely through his untiring counsel and exertions and after a formidable fight with the Irish Government of which ample evidences exist in his correspondence, he gained for them the elective franchise.

It has been the fate of political leaders in Ireland, not to have their designs approved, or comprehended, by persons of the same class in England, either from some radical differences of opinion, conduct, or temperament, or from the opposite views which the immediate seat of government and a dependency of such government, may deem it their interest to entertain. On this occasion they were not more fortunate than on others. Young Burke, though from various causes of prepossession, inclined to take the most favourable views of the leading men of the day there, found something in their conduct not to his taste. He had reasons perhaps for being fastidious. To moderation, good sense, and sterling talents, he united a firmness and rectitude of character which led him to augur ill of a country where what he considered contrary qualities prevailed among some of her chief people, which the following extract of a letter to Mr. Smith, evinces—"The great disorder of this country (Ireland) seems to me to consist in the complication of its politics; and I observe a very dangerous fluctuation

and unsteadiness in the opinions and conduct of most of its public men."

In the spring of the year (23rd February) died Sir Joshua Reynolds, one of the most valued of his friends, bequeathing him in return for the trouble of executorship, the sum of £2000, and also cancelling a bond for the same amount lent on a former occasion. This proof of regard was a legacy paid to thirty-five years of close and uninterrupted intimacy, in which many of their friendships, many of their sentiments and feelings were the same. A rumour has pretty generally prevailed that the President was indebted to the pen of Mr. Burke for the substance of his celebrated Lectures on Painting: but of this there is no proof, not even that he corrected them, though such an unimportant act of friendship is not improbable. The suspicion however is unfair to the artist. No man of talents should be deprived of the honest fame due to him, but on the most incontrovertible evidence. It is no doubt probable that he profited as other men profit by the conversation and experience, by the society and brilliant effusions of a vigorous and original mind thrown out upon art as upon other subjects, traces of which are supposed to be found in the lectures by some of those staunch literary pointers whom nothing in the shape of coincidence escapes. After all, these are of no moment and do not detract in any degree from the painter's merit. "What the illustrious Scipio was to Lælius," says Mr. Malone, "the all-knowing and all-accomplished Burke was to Reynolds." A passage in one of Barry's letters informs us of the uses to which an able artist in the higher walk of his profession could put the overflowings of such an intellect, scattered as they were with a profusion which might render the recollection of his own offspring by Reynolds from that of another not always practicable. Yet it is only a superior mind that can make use of another superior mind.—Writing from Rome he says—"It is impossible to describe to you what an advantage I had in the acquaintance of Mr. Burke; it was a preparative, and facilitated my relish for the beautiful things of the arts here: and I will affirm from experience, that one gentleman of a literary turn and delicate feelings for the ideal, poetical, and expressive parts of the art, is likely to be of the greatest service to a young artist." Mr. Burke first suggested to Sir Joshua the well-known picture of Ugolino;

while in return he entertained so favourable an opinion of the painter's judgment and discrimination as a philosopher as to submit to him in manuscript the *Reflections on the Revolution in France*. Mr. Burke directed the imposing ceremonial of the funeral; but when at the conclusion of the day he attempted to return thanks in the name of the family to the Members of the Academy for the attention shown to the remains of their late President, his feelings found vent in tears; and unable to utter a word, was obliged to give up the attempt after several fruitless efforts.* A character of the deceased, drawn up for the newspapers a few hours after his death, was immediately and truly attributed to his pen; and has been universally admired for a felicity of thought and elegance of diction rarely equalled by our finest writers on their finest subjects, and which on a topic where he felt any interest seems ever to have guided his pen. "It is," says the learned Seward, "the eulogium of Parrhasius pronounced by Pericles—it is the eulogium of the greatest painter by the most consummate orator of his time." Even a virulent enemy terms it "as fine a portrait as Reynolds ever painted."†

* He became guardian to Miss Palmer, Sir Joshua's niece and heiress, afterwards Lady Inchiquin and Marchioness of Thomond. When the marriage articles were brought to be signed, Mr. Burke addressed her in an impressive speech applicable to her intended change of condition, which, however, agitated her so much as to render her utterly incapable of holding the pen. Every effort was made to calm her in order to procure the signature, but in vain; all his soothing powers were exerted endearingly and perseveringly without effect; and the party separated for the time unable to accomplish the purpose of their meeting.

† "His illness was long, but borne with a mild and cheerful fortitude, without the least mixture of any thing irritable or querulous, agreeably to the placid and even tenor of his whole life. He had, from the beginning of his malady, a distinct view of his dissolution; and he contemplated it with that entire composure, which nothing but the innocence, integrity, and usefulness of his life, and an unaffected submission to the will of Providence, could bestow. In this situation he had every consolation from family tenderness, which his own kindness to his family had indeed well deserved.

"Sir Joshua Reynolds was on very many accounts, one of the most memorable men of his time. He was the first Englishman who added the praise of the elegant arts to the other glories of his country. In taste, in grace, in facility, in happy invention, and in the richness and harmony of colouring, he was equal to the great masters of renowned ages. In portrait he went beyond them; for he communicated to that department of the art in which English artists are the most engaged, a variety, a

The question of the Slave Trade being discussed in April, he forwarded to Mr. Dundas, "Sketch of a Negro Code," drawn up in 1780, when as he observes, the abolition seeming altogether chimerical on account of the strong party opposed to it, he aimed at carrying into effect the next best remedies which could be devised—that of subjecting the trade to strict regulations, and by legislative enactments ameliorating the condition of the slaves in the islands. On this project much inquiry, consideration, and labour were expended. It is not the mere draught of a common act of Parliament, but an extensive system, coherent in its parts and bearings, and does honour to the benignant spirit of one who was ever active in the service of suffering humanity.

During the session, he exerted himself less than on former occasions, being now he said, a worn-out veteran desirous to retire, and only coming forward now and then as veterans are accustomed to do, when the garrison of the constitution was exposed to attack. A measure considered of this nature was a notice of motion by Mr. Grey (30th April, 1792), for Parliamentary Reform, brought forward at the instigation of persons who had taken that measure under their special protection as "Friends of the People." This

fancy, and a dignity derived from the higher branches, which even those who professed them in a superior manner did not always preserve when they delineated individual nature. His portraits remind the spectator of the invention of history and of the amenity of landscape. In painting portraits he appears not to be raised upon that platform, but to descend to it from a higher sphere. His paintings illustrate his lessons, and his lessons seem to have been derived from his paintings. He possessed the theory as perfectly as the practice of his art. To be such a painter, he was a profound and penetrating philosopher.

"In full happiness of foreign and domestic fame, admired by the expert in art and by the learned in science, courted by the great, caressed by sovereign powers, and celebrated by distinguished poets, his native humility, modesty, and candour never forsook him, even on surprise or provocation; nor was the least degree of arrogance or assumption visible to the most scrutinizing eye in any part of his conduct or discourse.

"His talents of every kind—powerful from nature, and not meanly cultivated by letters—his social virtues in all the relations and in all the habitudes of life, rendered him the centre of a very great and unparalleled variety of agreeable societies, which will be dissipated by his death. He had too much merit not to provoke some jealousy, too much innocence to provoke any enmity. The loss of no man of his time can be felt with more sincere, general, and unmixed sorrow.

"Hail! and farewell!"

association he stigmatized as of dangerous tendency. "The object at which they aimed," he said, "was little better; the motives of many concerned in it were doubtless innocent, but the way they went to work was as decidedly wrong. The sense of the people had not been in the least declared on the measure; no specific grievance had been pointed out, no specific remedy assigned, and unless these were explicitly set forth, there might be innovation attempted, but it would not be reformation. While he could raise a voice or an arm to prevent it, that House should never assimilate to the National Assembly. In that body there were seven hundred members, four hundred of whom were country lawyers, three hundred of no description that he could name; out of the whole, he believed there were not a dozen who possessed in any one way a hundred pounds per annum. He trusted to the good sense of the people of England never to permit such a mob, nor any thing resembling it, to usurp the sacred office of their legislature."

The next question was on the motion of Mr. Fox, May 11th, to repeal certain statutes, bearing upon the Unitarian body. An outline of this speech seemingly drawn up *after* its delivery as allusions are made to some points advanced in the debate, appears in the tenth volume of his Works. He opposed their claims on the ground of being avowed enemies of the Church. They had lately accused themselves of disgraceful timidity in concealing their sentiments, and now were to atone for that timidity by extraordinary boldness. They had openly declared their hostility to the establishment. They had confessed their determination to propagate their doctrines. He urged that from their new lights in theology, and new lights in politics, which latter had been if possible more ostentatiously and offensively proclaimed than the former, they did not present any sufficient claim to the favourable consideration of the House. The motion was lost by 142 to 63.

The proclamation issued some time afterward against seditious writings, elicited strong symptoms of differences of opinion among the great body of Opposition which it was evident must soon lead to a disjunction. The *old* Whigs, or the Duke of Portland's friends wholly disagreed on most of the topics of the day with the *new*, or the followers of Mr. Fox. A nominal union still existed between them in the House.

But the dangers of the country becoming daily more apparent, and the predictions of their more ancient ally and leader, Mr. Burke, being day after day verified, impressed a gradual and general belief in that connexion of the greater prudence and patriotism of following his opinions.

In the mean time, the characteristic caprice, ill-temper, or ambition of the Chancellor, Lord Thurlow,—who often opposed the measures of Mr. Pitt in the Cabinet and in the House of Lords without proposing any thing himself—induced the Minister to procure his dismissal. An intimation was likewise conveyed to the Portland party of his wish for its junction with the government; and as it was desirable that all the talents of the country should be engaged in its service, he did not object to include Mr. Fox. This arrangement was particularly pressed upon the minister by Burke, who also pressed the policy of acceding to it upon Fox through indirect channels; and the fact is honourable to his candour, his patriotism, and even his friendship. Yet he was frequently accused while thus employed, of being that gentleman's personal enemy. Mr. Fox refused to accede to the proposition unless Mr. Pitt first resigned the head of the Treasury, when they might then treat upon terms of perfect equality and enter the Cabinet as new men—a piece of humility not justly to be expected from the minister, or from any other man holding the same situation. The negotiation consequently for the present proved fruitless. Lord Loughborough and Mr. Dundas were the parties who discussed the projected junction, of which an account is given in September by Edmund to William Burke, still in India.

All the threatening symptoms of the spring increased during the summer of 1792. Incendiary pamphlets to a large extent, constant communication of the clubs of London with those of Paris, and affiliated societies in some country towns, openly advocated Republicanism. In Paris, anarchy proceeding in its usual course became at length open massacre; followed by the dethronement of the King, the institution of a republic, and encouraged by the repulse of the Duke of Brunswick from the frontier, with a paternal invitation to all other countries to follow the example.

In November, while at Bath, Mr. Burke drew up another important State paper, "*Heads for Consideration on the Present State of Affairs*," distinguished by the same pro-

found sagacity as the others, copies of which were sent to the King, Ministers, and chief members of the Portland party, as he had done with the "Thoughts" of the preceding year. Its aim is to point out that war, however pushed off for the moment, was inevitable; that nothing could be done conjointly or singly by Austria and Prussia, or any other continental power, with effect against France, excepting they have other aid. "That there never was, nor is, nor ever will be, nor ever can be," any decided impression made upon her of which England is not the directing power—With what truth time has shewn us; though Mr. Pitt had just before said in the House there would be no war. The whole paper, thrown off without finish or participation in the knowledge of official secrets, displays the reflective discrimination of a great statesman as correctly as if they had been actually under his eye.

While advancing life and impaired friendships made him less active in Parliament, they did not in the least diminish his epistolary labours. These on the contrary, seemed increased and strengthened. French affairs were largely dwelt upon in letters to Lord Grenville, Mr. Dundas, several French correspondents, and to his son, then in Dublin pushing on the Romanist claims; the latter being the subject of long communications, some of which were published many years ago from another quarter. Thus busy discussing the greatest affairs of nations, the smaller concerns of life and literature were not neglected. His friend Mr. Philip Francis asked for an inscription on a former Master of St. Paul's School, saying, "Several of us pretended scholars have been hammering our brains for an inscription, but what signifies malleation without fire? Be so good as to lend us a little of yours." Malone consults him on a Latin motto for an engraved card of thanks to the distinguished attendants at Sir Joshua's funeral. Lady Inchiquin, Sir Joshua's niece, requests something more than he had already said on her uncle, and his collection of pictures. The King of Poland sends him a medal, which extracts an eloquent letter of thanks. To his brother member for Malton, Mr. Weddell, he enters at length upon the hostile conduct of his late party—his exertions to raise Mr. Fox in the estimation of the Dissenters; the ingratitude received in return; the coldness experienced by him from Carlton House, through the means of his former friends;

the disapprobation expressed by the Prince of his book, because nothing had been said in it of his right to the Regency, although he had already fought that battle fully and zealously elsewhere. And he concludes of his late Whig allies, "They have endeavoured completely and fundamentally to ruin me and mine, in all the ways in which it is in the power of man to destroy the interests and objects of man, whether in his friendships, his fortunes, or his reputation." While thus angry as a politician, we must not forget him as a considerate and good *man*. He remembers nearly at the same moment, two old reduced ladies in Ireland, and Sir Joshua's legacy, and thus writes to his son, "Now, my dearest Richard, I have destined a twentieth of what is fallen to us to these two poor women—fifty to each. * * God knows how little we can spare it."

The first day of the Session, 1792-3, December 13th, brought him forward again, "not," he said, "as the defender of Opposition, or of Ministry, but of the country." Mr. Fox still retained, and enforced with a warmth that astonished and confounded many devoted admirers, his former opinions as to the quiet state of the country, the total absence of any spirit in it hostile to the Constitution or Government, and that the alarm arose from artful designs and practices of Ministers; moving an amendment to the address to that effect. On the report being brought up, he again proposed an amendment to avert the calamities of war with France, by entering into negociation with her rulers. This Mr. Burke replied to, urging that could war be avoided it were advisable, but he saw a spirit at work that would leave them no option—that he could not recognise a tittle of that peaceful spirit which those persons were stated to possess, who, without the formality of a public declaration, were as hostile to the government, property, and respectability of England as they well could be. Between the nations, there was at that moment a moral war, which must soon become an actual war. Disregarding the general feeling, Mr. Fox brought forward on the third day of this struggle (15th December), a motion for sending a Minister to Paris, to treat with the Provisional Government. To this likewise the member for Malton opposed a negative. He complained of being singled out for acrimony and invective whenever the French Revolution was mentioned, as if in the eyes of Opposition he had

committed an inexpressible crime by attacking it. He defended Government from principle, he said, not from interest.

The sentiments uttered by Mr. Fox on these occasions, and the pertinacity of his line of conduct, gave offence to many of the Opposition, who either were less personally attached, whose opinions had undergone a change, or who like Burke, preferred the performance of a great public duty to any private consideration whatever. Among these was Lord Sheffield, who from partiality to Mr. Fox, or from not perceiving at first to what his opinions tended, it will be remembered, was a principal cause of the rupture with Burke. He now went so far as to say, that he was ashamed of *ever* having entertained any enthusiasm for the right honourable mover of such a measure as that now recommended. Others, if less strong, were not less explicit in their terms of disapprobation.

While his opinions continued thus to gain ground, an incident turned attention from his matter to his manner. A bill was introduced for the regulation of Aliens, in favour of which he made a long and able speech (28th December), on the principle that the ministers of a monarchy could not and ought not to have their hands tied behind them, while the emissaries of republicanism, regicide, and atheism, poured into their country with the design to destroy it. In commenting upon a decree of the Convention, by which the system of fraternizing was to be propagated by the sword, he mentioned the circumstance of three thousand daggers having been ordered at Birmingham, of which seventy had been delivered; and as a tangible illustration of his statement drew forth a concealed one which he flung indignantly upon the floor of the House. "*This*," said he, pointing to the weapon, "is what you are to gain by an alliance with France; wherever their principles are introduced, their practice must follow: you must equally proscribe their tenets and their persons from our shores." So unusual a peroration if not effective within doors, created a great deal of notice without, and was stigmatized as a vile theatrical flourish, a premeditated pantomimic trick unworthy of a great orator, and in the worst taste. That similar displays have had effect in enforcing an argument, the history of oratory may show; but in this instance we have indubitable evidence that there was in it very little premeditation. "The history of it,"

(the dagger) says Sir Charles Lamb, "is, that it was sent to a manufacturer at Birmingham as a pattern, with an order to make a large quantity like it. At that time the order seemed so suspicious that instead of executing it, he came to London and called on my father, (afterwards Sir James Bland Burgess, then Foreign Under Secretary) at the Secretary of State's Office to inform him of it, and ask his advice; and he left the pattern with him. Just after, Mr. Burke called on his way to the House of Commons, and upon my father mentioning the thing to him, borrowed the dagger to show in the House. They walked down to the House together, and when Mr. Burke had made his speech, my father took the dagger again, and kept it as a curiosity."*

The course of nature was now exacting from him the hardest tax which age has to pay, that of seeing our friends gradually dropping into the grave around us, without our possessing the elasticity of spirit necessary to form new connexions. Shortly before this period, he had lost his early friend Shackleton, whose occasional visits and letters kept alive that ardour of affection with which the associates of our youth are regarded in subsequent life, and never perhaps so tenderly as when from increasing infirmity their tenure of life becomes daily more precarious. To the letter of Mrs. Leadbeater, announcing the event, he wrote an affectionate reply, in September, sketching the character of her father with truth and discrimination.

The war which he had so long predicted as inevitable, but which Mr. Pitt did not foresee and would not till the last admit to be probable, was now at hand, precipitated perhaps by the opening of the Scheldt, by the promise of assistance from the National Convention to all people who should wish to throw off the tyranny of Kings, and particularly by the execution of Louis XVI. Mr. Burke was not pleased with the assignment of the former motive, deeming it weak in comparison with some others.—"A war for the Scheldt!" exclaimed he in his forcible phraseology as soon as it was mentioned; "A war for a cham—r p—t!"—War at this moment however was no longer matter of choice with the Ministry, being formally declared against England by the Republic on the 1st of February. Wilberforce thus reports

* Life of Lord Eldon, 1846, vol. i. p. 152.

† Life, vol. ii. p. 11.

political opinions at the moment "It will be a very short war," said Mr. Pitt and his friends, "and certainly ended in one or two campaigns." "No, Sir," said Mr. Burke when this language was addressed to him, "it will be a long war, and a dangerous war, but it must be undertaken."* A distinct line of political feeling, though not of formal separation now existed between the new Whigs and the old, leaving Mr. Fox not only reduced in numbers in Parliament, but greatly impaired in moral strength and credit in general opinion; for his remaining friends though unquestionably men of talents, possessed not in any sense, the confidence of the country.

It has been matter of surprise and regret to many moderate politicians, how that eminent man could so perseveringly resist and condemn a measure which was in itself unavoidable and supported by the general, and as it proved in the result, just judgment of the country, or how he could have acted otherwise than Mr. Pitt did, had he been himself Minister. It may be possible that had Mr. Pitt led the Opposition, the spirit so inherent in political rivalry might have induced him to do as Mr. Fox did; or in other words, that with the difference of men, the results to the country would have been similar. In saying this, no reflection is intended against the strict integrity of principle of either; but we are all even the best intentioned, too prone to shape opinions to circumstances. It is therefore difficult for the most conscientious statesman to view with the same degree of favour or through the same medium, measures originated by himself or by those to whom he is politically opposed. He will rarely estimate public affairs and measures by the same standard whether he be in or out of power. Had Mr. Fox been in office, his views, his feelings, his prejudices, his judgment, would have differed with the difference of his public relations to the government. His anxieties would have been greater; his apprehensions more easily excited; his penetration more sharp and sensitive by the very weight of his charge; he could scarcely have seen or heard, it may be said, with the same eyes and ears as when at the head of Opposition; and all this without sacrifice of principle. The workings of the mind, arising from heavy responsibility, nearer views, better information, and more direct contact

* Life, vol. ii. p. 11.

with the machinery of the state and of the real rather than the ostensible grounds of its proceedings, are so imperceptible very often in their operation, that a statesman is liable to be wound gradually round from the opinions he may have formerly entertained to others of a different description, almost without being aware of the change; and is sometimes surprised, or indignant when told he is inconsistent with himself. This allowance ought to be made for public men, though it is generally denied them.

Mr. Pitt it is certain, like Mr. Fox, had no appetite for war, or as we have seen, belief in its approach. His glories had been hitherto peculiarly of the peaceful cast—his popularity acquired in a state of prosperity and tranquillity. War might destroy, but was not likely to add to them. His interest therefore was to avoid hostilities; and so well did he know this and desire by all the means in his power to accomplish it, that he could not be brought to believe what Mr. Burke had repeatedly told him almost constantly for more than two years before, that war must inevitably ensue. Far from precipitating that event, he staved it off until the last moment when no alternative was left him. How Mr. Fox placed in the same situation could have avoided the storm, it is impossible to conjecture. He was above state quackery, and never professd to have discovered any nostrum by which to subject raging political madmen whether at home or abroad, to the dominion of quiet and reason. He was indeed, in many respects an easy man, a friendly man, an illustrious man, with great capacity of head, and much of the milk of human kindness in his heart; but the foreign race of revolutionists showed no particular attention to individual character except in cutting off the heads of those who enjoyed it; and there is no reason to believe that their disciples here would have been more merciful.

Admitting that his vigilance on this point was greater than he avowed, it is not improbable that as Minister, he might have parleyed a little longer with the Republic; he might have withheld some of our reasonable demands; he might have for the forlorn hope of peace, overlooked slighter affronts; he might still have tolerated the revolution, and constitutional, and corresponding societies, and their affiliations; he might have submitted some time longer to importations of the emissaries and principles of anarchy; but as the demands on his patience rose so even his con-

cessions must have had an end. With all his partialities to popular license, he must have discovered to what these abuses of it tended. He could not long have trifled with the quick discernment of George III., whose good sense and decision in moments of difficulty has never perhaps been rated at their due value. He could not have resisted the deliberate conviction of his co-adjutors in office, especially of the great Whig families, the supporters and partners of his fame for so many years. Least of all could he have withstood as Minister, the intuitive sagacity, the prophetic warnings so constantly fulfilled, the clear views, and conclusive reasonings of Mr. Burke, though as leader of Opposition his pride shrunk from acquiescing in any thing which implied tacit deference to the measures adopted no matter on whose suggestion, by Mr. Pitt. That war would therefore have ensued had even he been at the helm, it is scarcely possible to doubt; that he would have conducted it differently may be probable; that it would have been better conducted is at best matter of opinion. But there is some ground to fear that it might have been delayed until the enemy had gained more ground and more proselytes; until the situation of the allied powers had become more precarious; until the throne and the constitution were beginning to totter under outrageous assaults; and consequently until our means of defence had become weakened.

When Mr. Pitt brought down the King's message regarding the declaration of war by France, and Mr. Fox on the following day (12th of February) moved an amendment to the address, Mr. Burke judging by the outline which remains of the speech, gave it a triumphant reply. Touching on the singular care of the Whig leader's friends, that not an idea, or a merit of any kind belonging to him, should be lost to the public, a peculiarity which strikes attentive readers of political history, he turned this fact to account, on an observation made by Mr. Fox. "The right honourable gentleman had complained bitterly of the misrepresentation of his expressions in that House. To him it appeared very extraordinary how a person of talents so clear, so powerful and so perspicuous could possibly be misunderstood—how a person who took so much pains by repetition, and going over the same grounds again and again, to bring his superior powers to the low level of the vulgar eye, could possibly be

subject to misrepresentation—how a gentleman whose friends out of doors neglected no human art to display his talents to their utmost advantage, and to detail his speeches to the public in such a manner, that he, though a close observer of the right honourable gentleman, had never been able to recollect a single idea of his that had escaped the industrious attention of his friends, while those of a right honourable friend of his (Mr. Windham), whose abilities were equalled by his virtues, were so mangled and so confused in the reports that were made of them, as to be utterly unintelligible to the public.”

Adverting to hostilities, he said—war was no common matter, no pastime for occupying the attention of a party, to be inconsiderately taken up or put down at pleasure. In a case of such importance to this country and to mankind as the present was, gentlemen should examine whether they had any sinister motive, as if they were in the Divine Presence, and act upon the pure result of such examination. He declared he had no hesitation to pronounce as if before that Presence, that Ministers had not precipitated the nation into war but were brought into it by over-ruling necessity. “I possess as deep a sense of the severe inflictions of war as any man can possibly do.

“Trembling I touch it, but with honest zeal.”

“I always held it as one of the last of evils, and wish only to adopt it now from the conviction that at no distant period we shall be obliged to encounter it at a much greater disadvantage. For four years past it has grieved me to the soul, it has almost reduced me to death, when I observed how things were going on, and felt my utmost exertions unable to produce upon the government of the country or in the public mind, a conviction of the danger that approached them. At length the infatuation was removed—Ministers awoke to the peril that awaited them ere it was too late.” * * * “*He readily allowed that this was the most dangerous war we were ever engaged in.*”

Six days afterward (February 18th) Mr Fox brought forward five resolutions condemnatory of the war, and of the principles on which it was undertaken, which Mr. Burke again opposed with all his powers. At the conclusion of his speech he presented the current doctrines of the

day in a new aspect.—“Gentlemen,” he said, “who were so charmed with the lights of this new philosophy, might say that age had rendered his eyes too dim to perceive the glorious blaze. But old though he was, he saw well enough to distinguish that it was not the light of heaven, but the light of rotten wood and stinking fish—the gloomy sparkling of collected filth, corruption and putrefaction.

“So have I seen in larder dark,
Of veal a sparkling loin,
Replete with many a brilliant spark,
As sage philosophers remark,
At once both stink and shine.”

In the debate on Sheridan's motion, brought forward March 4th, relative to the existence of seditious practices said to prevail in the country, some altercation arose between Fox and Burke, on a contradiction given by the former to some statements made by the latter, of which he said he had proofs in his possession, respecting the Princess Lamballe and M. Egalité (Duke of Orleans). To another insinuation by the Whig leader, that he was deserted by his party from weariness of travelling so long in the barren track of opposition, Burke replied that “the new track through which he had called upon them to follow him was no common waste, but the barrenest of the barren—the deserts of Arabia. But if a caravan travelling through those deserts should find that their leader, from passion or obstinacy, had wandered from the right road, and that by following him they were in danger of being attacked by some plundering Sheik, they might be allowed to think a little of their own safety, and take measures for securing it. He could say for himself that he had deserted no party; and that of those with whom he had been accustomed to act, there was not one that differed from him in opinion on the present state of affairs, or disapproved of a single vote he had given in the course of the present session. *Those who had incidentally joined that party by the way, had no claim upon him.*” This was no doubt true, and therefore unanswerable. Fox, who we know began life as a ministerialist had joined the party of which Burke was the chief organ, after very deliberate consideration for three years, that is from 1774 to 1777. He could scarcely therefore complain of desertion by them if he thought it necessary to dissent from their views.

The Traitorous Correspondence bill (March 22nd) produced two speeches in its support, in the first of which he denounced several of the clubs of France who had assailed his name with threats and obloquy. He also noticed part of a speech from a member of the National Convention, Citizen Lasource, who laments that—"The moment is not yet arrived in which may be seen at the bar of the revolutionary tribunal, that Orestes of the British Parliament, the madman Burke, that insolent Lord Grenville, or that plotter Pitt. But the moment is arrived in which the public have summoned them to the bar of their opinion * * * *. Soon shall they be laid prostrate before the altar of liberty, from which they shall rise only to mount the scaffold that awaits them, and to expiate by their deaths the evils in which they have involved the human race." The second speech (9th April) was exceedingly able and argumentative, by far the best delivered upon the occasion. Touching on the supposed injury to commerce, he said, "England was a commercial nation—so was every other, as far as it could. But if by commercial nation it was implied that commerce was her ultimate, her only end, he would deny it; her commerce was a subservient instrument to her greater interests, her security, her honour, and her religion. If the commercial spirit tended to break those, he insisted that it should be lowered." * * * * "Let us not turn our every thing, the love of our country, our honour, our virtue, our religion, our security, to traffic—and estimate them by the scale of pecuniary or commercial reckoning. The nation that goes to that calculation destroys itself." On the 17th of June he came forward vigorously to oppose Mr. Fox's motion for an address to His Majesty, for the re-establishment of peace with France.

Since the open disunion of Burke and Fox, some cessation of public intercourse, though none whatever of esteem or private friendship, had occurred between the former and the Duke of Portland, from an idea entertained by his Grace that the latter would in time be brought round to form sounder opinions upon the great question in dispute; and in the mean time lest an impression of favour or partiality to either should interfere to prevent it, he desired to keep somewhat aloof from both gentlemen. The motive for this the member for Malton perfectly understood, and did not

disapprove, being as anxious as the Duke to make a convert of his former friend. But daily occurrences rendering this event more and more improbable, less ceremony became necessary in their intercourse, and during the summer the Burkes, father and son, accompanied that nobleman to Oxford, on his formal installation as Chancellor of the University, the former having likewise attended a private ceremony of the same nature at Bulstrode, the preceding October. He was received by the heads of this seat of learning with all the marked respect and attention which his celebrity claimed at their hands; but it is said refused to be proposed for the honorary degree of LL.D. which on a former occasion there had been some hesitation to grant. His son however, as well as Mr. Windham and others, received this mark of attention. He himself resided chiefly with Mr. Winstanley, Principal of Alban Hall and Camden Professor of Ancient History, who was much impressed by the various knowledge and brilliancy of conversation of his guest, and of whose qualifications as a philologist he thus wrote soon afterward:—

“It would be indeed as useless as it would be presumptuous in me to attempt to add to the reputation of Mr. Burke. Among the studies to which I have immediately applied, there is one which, from his attention to the more important concerns of active life, it might be supposed that he had overlooked: I mean that of ancient and modern languages. Those however who were acquainted with the universality of his information, will not be surprised to hear that it would have been exceedingly difficult to have met with a person who knew more of the philosophy, the history and filiation of languages, or of the principles of etymological deduction, than Mr. Burke.” His society indeed proved a treat to all who either possessed or who knew how to value in others, intellectual superiority. Gibbon, who had just arrived from Switzerland after some years’ absence, sought him out immediately, and writes at this time twice in his letters, “I spent a delightful day with Burke.” To his son, who had spent the earlier part of the year in Ireland, on the business of his mission in favour of the Roman Catholics, he addressed a letter on that important question, which was never finished but possesses all his characteristic power.

CHAPTER XIII.

Letter to the Duke of Portland on the Conduct of the Minority—Character of Mr. Dundas—Remarks on the Policy of the Allies—Richard Burke the Elder—Report upon the causes of the duration of Mr. Hastings's Trial—Junction of the Old Whigs with Ministry—Death of Young Burke—*Laurence's Letters.*

THE tendency of the politics of Mr. Fox becoming more generally questioned in the country, and to many a source of suspicion if not of apprehension, he thought it necessary to explain and defend his conduct by a letter addressed to his constituents, the electors of Westminster. This piece Mr. Burke characterised generally as eloquent, but with more forbearance than his friend Fox thought it necessary to display towards his "Reflections," he refrained from invidious criticism. Dr. Parr, however, though so staunch a friend of the "Man of the People," expressed himself slightly of the taste and literary merits displayed in its execution, observing in conversation, "there were in it passages at which Addison would have *smiled*, and Johnson *growled*."

A resolution of the Whig Club about this time, moved by Lord William Russell—that their confidence in Mr. Fox was confirmed, strengthened, and increased by the calumnies against him—did not appear to operate much in setting him right in public opinion. But being evidently levelled at the exceptions taken to his parliamentary conduct by Mr. Burke, Mr. Windham, Sir Gilbert Elliot, and others, they immediately withdrew their names from the Club, to the number of forty-five noblemen and gentlemen, writing their reasons for seceding. Insinuations being likewise thrown out that the Duke of Portland had concurred in the resolution of Lord W. Russell, Mr. Burke in justification of his own and his friends' censures, drew up for the consideration of his Grace as the head of the party, and who still clung to the person, not opinions, of the Opposition leader in the Commons, the famous "*Observations on the Conduct of the Minority.*"

This paper details under fifty-four heads a strong case against Mr. Fox, which that gentleman's friends characterized as an unjustifiable proceeding; but it is difficult to conceive for what reason, except it be deemed unfair and injudicious to detach those we respect and desire to serve, from attachments and from proceedings which we ourselves

hold to be wrong, and which are held to be so by the body of the nation. Thinking upon public affairs as Burke was known to do, it is not to be supposed that he would act otherwise than he did. The paper was transmitted to the Duke as a confidential communication sealed up, with an intimation that he did not desire it to be read by him until a disconnection of interests with Mr. Fox should take place, which the writer pronounced to be inevitable. It cannot therefore be justly characterized as being meant to *produce* a rupture between that nobleman and the leader in the House of Commons ; but rather as matter for consideration *consequent* upon such an event occurring from other causes. His own words in the letter to the Duke which accompanied the paper are—"I now make it my humble request to your Grace, that you will not give any sort of answer to the paper I send, or to this letter, except barely to let me know that you have received them. I even wish that at present you may not read the paper which I transmit ; lock it up in the drawer of your library table, and when a day of compulsory reflection comes, then be pleased to turn to it. Then remember that your Grace had a true friend, who had, comparatively with men of your description, a very small interest in opposing the modern system of morality and policy ; but who, under every discouragement, was faithful to public duty and to private friendship. I shall then probably be dead. I am sure I do not wish to live to see such things ; but whilst I do live I shall pursue the same course."

Communicated thus in confidence, it might have remained for ever or for a long time unknown to the world, but for the scandalous breach of confidence committed by the amanuensis, an ungrateful or needy man named Swift, whom he had rescued from abject poverty ; and who having kept a copy of what he was employed to transcribe, surreptitiously printed it in 1797, under the invidious title of "Fifty-four Articles of Impeachment against the Right Hon. C. J. Fox." Mr. Burke being then at Bath confined to bed, his friends in town obtained an injunction from the Chancellor to stop the circulation, but too late to prevent the distribution of many copies through the country. He wrote directly to Dr. Laurence, desiring him to disclaim the act and the intention of publication, but not one of the sentiments which the paper contained.

The aim of it was unquestionably to beat down the belief that either the conduct or doctrine of Mr. Fox was constitutional, and to show that his proceedings on many recent occasions evinced an ambitious, a meddling, almost a treasonable,* any thing indeed, but a patriotic spirit. The heated exaggerations of his devoted friends perhaps required to be cooled down to this freezing level. The care with which they reported his speeches and detailed his sentiments, so that nothing should be lost to the public, has been already noticed. Yet Mr. Burke should scarcely have gone so far in condemning what in former days in some measure originated with himself, except indeed he imagined he possessed an exclusive privilege to pull down the idol he had contributed in no small degree to raise. He it was who first gave Mr. Fox to the world as a great man. He wrote him and spoke him first into public esteem. He enlisted him into his party. He pushed him forward to lead to a certain degree the Rockingham connection over his own head, regardless of personal interest or of that still greater object personal importance, which was sure to accrue to himself from keeping such an ally at a distance. He knew that Mr. Fox, as much by his connexions as by his talents and rising popularity, would be most useful to his party, and that from his friendships and sway over the most promising young men coming forward in Parliament, he was likely to possess a weight there which he himself, from many causes already specified, could not hope to acquire. There was the further motive of the regard as a master for a favourite pupil, for he tells us that Fox was brought to him when only a boy of fourteen. The triumph of one therefore was in some degree a merit of both.

All this early partiality was therefore not without an object: but it was a party not private object; and therefore exhibited his personal disinterestedness. The fact shows us likewise the total absence on his part of any feeling akin to jealousy. It must not however be understood that he submitted to become a secondary person in this junction of

* This alludes to the report of sending his friend Mr. Adair, with his *cypher*, to St. Petersburg, to counteract the objects at which the Ambassador of the Crown aimed. This story Sir Robert Adair has denied as being untrue or exaggerated, but so strong was the impression of its truth even in the Cabinet at the time, that a proposition was made to arrest Mr. Fox, which Mr. Pitt negatived.

interests, which was rather an alliance than subjection of one to the other, for both continued to be principals : Burke being on many occasions the actuating spirit, and Fox the public leader of the party. It is certain that whatever the one had determined to do, the other found it commonly expedient to approve. There may be a question therefore among those best acquainted with political history whether Mr. Fox would ever have arrived at such pre-eminence in his party or in the country as he possessed, had it not been for the active aid and counsel of Burke.*

No effect—certainly no immediate influence—was induced by this communication on the mind of the Duke. Instead of putting the “Observations,” away for future perusal as recommended by his correspondent he confesses to being “seduced” to read them and the accompanying letter immediately ; and his reply from Welbeck (10th October 1793) candidly avows that he was wholly unconvinced by the reasoning of the paper. “It is no disgrace to me to admit—and were it so I should feel no difficulty in avowing it to you and indeed to the world—that my imagination, my feelings, my judgment, my conclusions, do not and cannot keep pace with yours. I have not the same sensibility, I have not the same fears, I have not the same confidence ; but I want not a day of *compulsory* reflection to make me see the horrors of Jacobinism and the duty of exerting my best efforts (those I mean which from their regularity and steadiness are

* Of his fondness to applaud, or as somebody has termed it, to *puff* his pupil, as much on private as on public occasions, the following extract of a letter to his cousin Nagle, written in October, 1777, during the visit of Mr. Fox to Ireland, is an instance—“I am heartily glad and obliged to you for your letter, and for your kind remembrance of me when you happened to see so many of my most particular friends in so remote and sequestered a spot as the Lake of Killarney. Ned Nagle told me that they were at your lodge, but your letter only expresses that you dined with them. Whenever you saw them I am sure that you passed a pleasant day ; and I may venture to say, with no less certainty, that the satisfactions of the Lake of Killarney were heightened by meeting you there, and by your obliging attention to them. * * * * Don't you like Charles Fox ? If you were not pleased on that short acquaintance you would on a further ; for he is one of the pleasantest men in the world, as well as the greatest genius that perhaps this country has ever produced. If he is not extraordinary, I assure you the British dominions cannot furnish any thing beyond him. I long to talk with him about you and your Lough.”

likely to be the most lasting) to resist, subdue, and finally extirpate the diabolical spirit which it has originated.”*

As a mark of respect for unwearied labours, and the interest which he took in the public cause, events of importance on the continent connected with the war, were communicated to him as to a cabinet minister, by a special messenger. When the news of the surrender of Valenciennes arrived, a communication of this nature found him at the little theatre of Chalfont-St-Peter, a few miles from Beaconsfield, when he interrupted the performance for the purpose of reading aloud the contents of the dispatch to the audience, pointing out as he proceeded, the importance of the conquest; and giving money to the humble orchestra to drink his Majesty's health, ordered them to play *God save the King*, inviting the audience to join in chorus. The information forwarded on this occasion, and other civilities of a similar nature, usually came through the channel of Mr. Dundas, with whom, of all the members of the cabinet at this time, he was most intimate, and for whom he had great regard, arising from real respect for his talents, and the possession of many personal good qualities.

This gentleman exhibited another instance of an eminent British statesman, detached from the active practice of the Law in almost the highest rank of the profession in his native country, to aim at a still higher prize in the lottery of political life in England. He was a younger son of the Lord President of the Court of Session in Scotland, and applying himself diligently to forensic pursuits, attained the important post of Lord Advocate at the age of thirty-four. Nearly about the same time he commenced his career in Parliament as member for the county of Edinburgh, and the American war breaking out soon afterward, he thought it his duty to support the measures of ministry in that unfortunate contest. Under Lord Shelburne's Administration, he accepted the office of Treasurer of the Navy. On this account he was charged, as all statesmen are at some period or other of their lives, with inconsistency in quitting

* The late Lord Holland gives the date, 1791, to these charges—another evidence either of incapacity to write accurate history, or systematic design to throw odium on the character of Burke, by implying that they were drawn up before the differences with Fox had become public and marked, and were therefore urged against him insidiously.

his former opinions on that topic, as well as with political ingratitude in deserting the falling fortunes of his original patron, Lord North. It was in this situation that he formed that intimate acquaintance, both personal and political with Mr. Pitt, which continued with uninterrupted regard for the remainder of their lives, and which tended so materially to his own political success. With him he was thrown out by the coalition ministry in 1783. With him he again returned to power, resuming his office in addition to becoming President of the Board of Control under the new system of government for India. With him he debated side by side the great and trying questions agitated during the revolutionary war; and with him quitted office in 1801, when unable to acquire for the Roman Catholics of Ireland those concessions which had been expected. Soon after his return to power as first Lord of the Admiralty, having been in the mean time raised to the peerage by the title of Viscount Melville, a dense cloud burst upon his head, and overshadowed his fame. This was the tenth report of the commissioners of naval inquiry, who in their examination into the business of the various offices in that department, charged him, if not with peculation, at least with mismanagement of the public money entrusted to his care, in his former office of Treasurer of the Navy. This shade however passed away. Of guilt he was acquitted by the House of Lords on the impeachment to which the charge gave rise; and the censure to which he was amenable arose perhaps from irregularity and negligence in the conduct of subordinates, and against which it is sometimes difficult for the head of a leading department of the state to guard.

As a Minister he was sagacious, acute, practical in his views, unwearied in the duties of his office, fond indeed of performing them, and not difficult of access. The country is indebted to him in no inconsiderable degree, for a variety of measures and suggestions, many of which remain to be appropriated to the rightful owner. The India department for many years owned him as chief. His knowledge of it, as may be supposed, became more extensive and minute than that of any other man in or out of Parliament excepting Burke; while in acquaintance with the details of the local governments and various characters of the Presidencies, official station gave him several advantages. Between them there might be said to be a monopoly of this

branch of information in Parliament. With Burke he participated in the error, if error can be proved to have been committed, of being the original accuser of Hastings. Some useful and important alterations connected with the administration of the government of India owe their origin to him. Among these was the extension of power to the Governor-General of that country, which while it left less room for bickerings and contentions between Governor and council which had formerly prevailed to so great a degree, exacted from the former in return for such confidence, a proportionate personal responsibility. At the commencement of the war with France, the volunteer system received an impulse from his judicious measures, which tended materially to rouse the spirit of the country. He planned and conducted, in opposition it is said to several dissentient voices in the Cabinet, the expedition to Egypt which expelled the French from that country. On his accession to the Admiralty, the same spirit of improvement accompanied him thither. Many judicious measures were devised for the comforts of the seamen, and the improvement of the situation of more than one class of officers, more especially those of the medical department which had been scandalously neglected, and in which to the reproach of the governing authorities, learning and talents still continue to meet with less consideration and reward than in any other branch of the public service.

During nearly the whole of his political life, the influence possessed in his native country was extensive, perhaps unexampled; and it implies no ordinary merit to find the quiet, the external prosperity, and the domestic improvement of the country to have kept pace with his tenure of power. No murmurings against him during this long period were heard; no dissatisfaction expressed for the exercise of this power—at undue partiality on the one hand, or unmerited disfavour on the other. In England it was his lot to be almost equally fortunate; and it must ever be considered a proof of singular exemption from great faults, or of moderation of conduct which deprived popular prejudice of its favourite food, that in a period of the most envenomed political warfare, nothing more serious could be urged against him than what a few harmless witticisms conveyed.

In Parliament, he never pretended to and never sought, the character of a finished and imposing orator. His man-

ner was ungraceful and dialect provincial. Content with grasping directly and forcibly the substance of his argument he appeared little solicitous about the elegance of the manner in which it should be handled. But there was a boldness and decision in his mode of address that always commanded attention, and a solidity and acuteness in the matter it conveyed which seldom failed to perform their office of convincing. No ministry could have possessed a more useful member. He was not so much cut out for brilliant and overpowering efforts on special occasions, as for necessary and laborious duties, the exposition and defence of measures, which he had daily to undertake in carrying on the actual business of the state. He was rarely to be taken unawares, but ready as it seemed, every day and every hour of the day, for debate. Constantly opposed as he and Mr. Burke had been to each other in the great theatre of national eloquence, neither the conflicting opinion, the biting sarcasm, nor the vehement reprehension with which a minister is often gratuitously assailed by a leader of Opposition, produced between them any thing like feelings of hostility. They first became more personally familiar in the session 1780-81, in consequence of serving on East India Committees; and saw in each other kindred qualities which subsequently served to soften something of the acerbity of party. From about the year 1790 until the death of Burke, frequent communication on public matters conveyed through private channels took place between them. There was in Mr. Dundas a goodness of heart that claimed esteem. He was frequently called upon by persons of whom he knew little to do kind offices, and he did them in the kindest, often in the most generous manner. He was frank, sociable, careless of money, and affectionate in his attachments,—qualities which acquired him nearly as many friends as he possessed acquaintance. Other and more imposing characteristics may belong to the statesman, but these call upon us to love and respect the memory of the man.

Mr. Burke, though a warm supporter of the war as the only means of saving the country, differed totally with Ministry on the mode of carrying it on, which was scarcely ever to his satisfaction; and looking to the results, his objections would seem to have been well grounded. One of the chief papers on the subject was “*Remarks on the Policy*

of the Allies with respect to France." It was begun in October 1793, and a passage displays such instinctive knowledge of France and Frenchmen, that the cause of the ill-success of the Bourbons in conciliating the public mind of that country will become immediately obvious, while it exhibits another instance of the singular sagacity which could teach that family so many years in advance of the event, how to *secure* their kingdom in case they should again acquire it. "Whoever claims a right by birth to govern there, must find in his breast, or conjure up in it an energy not to be expected, not always to be wished for, in well ordered states. The lawful prince must have in everything but crime the character of an usurper. He is gone if he imagines himself the quiet possessor of a throne. He is to contend for it as much after an apparent conquest as before. His task is to win it: he must leave posterity to enjoy and to adorn it. No velvet cushions for him. He is to be always (I speak nearly to the letter) on horseback. This opinion is the result of much patient thinking on the subject, which I conceive no event is likely to alter."—The terms and spirit of the declaration or manifesto issued by the British Government, under date of October 29th (1793), he highly approved, but thought its promulgation ill-timed and imprudent at a moment when from the successes of the enemy and the reverses of our own arms, hostile manifestoes appeared more petulant than formidable.

In another passage he specifically points out in express terms as if futurity was open to his view, that no settlement of France could be hoped to be immediate. Military rule, or something tantamount to it, must precede the formation of regular government. "What difficulties will be met with in a country exhausted by the taking of its capital (in money) and among a people in a manner new-principled, trained, and actually disciplined to anarchy, rebellion, disorder, and impiety, may be conceived by those who know what Jacobin France is, and who may have occupied themselves by revolving in their thoughts what they were to do if it fell to their lot to re-establish the affairs of France. What support or what limitations the restored Monarchy must have, may be a doubt, or how it will pitch or settle at last; *but one thing I conceive to be far beyond a doubt; that the settlement cannot be immediate; but that it must be*

preceded by some sort of power, equal at least in vigour, vigilance, promptitude, and decision, to a military government."

The affairs of that country and the conduct of the war, as they occupied his mind, engrossed likewise the chief portion of his correspondence. Shortly before the execution of Louis XVI. he received an affecting letter from the Abbé Edgworth, expressing his regret at being now compelled to continue in that "land of horrors," as the "*Malheureux Maître*" had solicited his presence to prepare him for that death soon so likely to take place, and which unhappily so soon followed. To the Comte de Mercy, Mr. Windham, Sir Gilbert Elliot, Mr. Dundas, Mr. Sylvester Douglas, (afterwards Lord Glenbervie), he wrote on the conduct of the war, censuring our neglect of La Vendée as one of the most favourable scenes for carrying it on. Letters on the same subject were exchanged with the Comte D'Artois, who being solicited by several of the noblemen and gentlemen engaged with the "Royal Army" to join them with aid, directed his views and solicitations to Burke as the most active friend in such an emergency, who in return could but plead inability to give more than advice from being unconnected with the government. To Mr. Dundas he addressed the draught of a letter for the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland on Roman Catholic affairs early in the year, which had the effect of expediting for that body the elective franchise, upon which Grattan addressed him in a congratulatory epistle. From the King of Poland he likewise received a communication, acknowledging that even in *his* affairs he had proved too truly a prophet. The approaching marriage of his niece with Captain Haviland produced several letters on family affairs to Ireland; and as evidence how readily his mind could grasp all subjects with equal ease and power, a letter was addressed to his old friend William Burke, now returned from India, who had translated Brissot's Address to his Constituents less successfully than he thought desirable. While to Arthur Murphy, who had dedicated to him his translation of Tacitus, two letters of acknowledgment were sent, the second full of judicious criticism on the usual translations from Latin prose writers.

Early in February, 1794, his affections received a severe shock in the death of his brother Richard, with whom, as with all his relatives, he had ever lived in a degree of

harmony and affection only known in the most united families. There was but little difference in their ages. They had started nearly at the same time, and under circumstances nearly similar though with very different capacities, to work up the hill of life together; and whenever the weaker powers of the younger caused him to lag behind, the hand of the elder was extended to aid him on the journey. For many years they had but one purse and one house, and many of their friendships and pursuits were in common. The talents of Richard, though bearing no comparison with those of his brother, might have placed him more conspicuously in life, had not constitutional vivacity and love of ease rendered him less patient of laborious application. He wrote well, but writing was not his choice. Lord Mansfield, who had formed a good opinion of his powers, pronounced him a rising man at the bar; but an inclination to politics, and the acceptance of the situation of one of the secretaries to the Treasury in 1782, and again in 1783, injured his prospects as a lawyer, though by the interest of his brother he became afterwards Recorder of Bristol, and one of the counsel on the trial of Mr. Hastings. His person was good; his features handsome; his manners prepossessing; which with the possession of wit and humour, gave him a ready introduction to the fashionable society of the metropolis. Goldsmith and he were intimate; and the Poet characterizes him almost as happily as he has done Edmund—

“While Dick with his pepper shall heighten the savour.”

And again—

“Here lies honest Richard, whose fate I must sigh at;
Alas, that such frolic should now be so quiet!
What spirits were his! what wit, and what whim!
Now breaking a jest and now breaking a limb!
Now wrangling and grumbling to keep up the ball!
Now teasing and vexing, yet laughing at all!
In short, so provoking a devil was Dick,
That we wished him full ten times a-day at Old Nick;
But missing his mirth and agreeable vein,
As often we wished to have Dick back again.”

A species of the wagghery thus attributed to him occasionally afforded amusement to the domestic circle of his brother.

He claimed the office it seems, of reading the newspaper aloud every morning at the breakfast table, making such jocular comments on the circumstances of the day as whim or humour suggested; and when these proved barren of matter for his genius, he would turn to his brother's speech of the preceding night, read a part of it correctly, then suddenly introduce something of his own of quite an opposite purport to the report, and continue to read with a grave face until interrupted by Edmund, with the exclamation—"That is all wrong, Dick; they quite mistake me." A silent assent was nodded by the wag, who nevertheless continued his teasing career of invention.—"These people," again would Mr. Burke exclaim, "are malicious or foolish to make me say such things." The wit, still unmoved by the simple perplexity of his brother at the stupidity of the reporters, would go on with something still more outrageous until finally stopped by the earnest and solemn assurance, "I declare to God, Dick, I said nothing of the kind." When in the West Indies, Richard, it appears, made a purchase which turned out unfortunate, and ultimately occasioned him considerable pecuniary loss. To this circumstance Edmund alludes in a letter to Mr. Nagle, of July, 1772—"Since my brother came home he has not been negligent in the management of his contested purchase. How the matter may finally terminate I know not; but hitherto he has gone on so successfully as to obtain a report of the Board of Trade recommending to the Council the disallowance of the Act of Provincial Assembly, which had put him out of possession and declared his title void. Thus far he has succeeded. Of the quiet and unmolested possession I do not despair; but as it is an affair of magnitude, so it will be a work of time and patience." Again in August, 1776, he says—"Richard the elder is in town. If his business had prospered, you would have been one of the first to hear of it. But we do not trouble our friends except with pleasing news. He has had much wrong done to him; but the thing is not yet desperate. I believe that the Commissioner who goes out will not have adverse instructions."

Mr. Burke took little share in parliamentary business until the session of 1794 was pretty far advanced, and then chiefly by speaking in favour of voluntary subscriptions and enrol-

ment of troops as not being unconstitutional, and as additional evidence to the enemy of the patriotic spirit of the country ; of permitting foreigners, more especially French Royalists, to enlist in the British Army ; and of detaining persons suspected of designs against the government. He opposed, as he had before done when himself a professed economical reformer, violent amputation of the emoluments of pensions, sinecures, and particularly of the efficient offices of administration, in a bill proposed at this time by Mr. Harrison ; observing that the amount would be contemptible in itself, and the principle absolutely dangerous. Similar sentiments on this point had been formerly declared by Mr. Fox.

A motion by General Fitzpatrick to intercede with the King of Prussia for the release of La Fayette, then confined in one of his prisons, drew from Burke severe animadversions upon that alleged patriotic leader, but as he said, actual author of many of the calamities of France. Instead of being termed an "illustrious exile," he was then, and ought to be always considered, the outcast of the world, who having neither talents to guide nor in the least to influence the storm he had so diligently laboured to raise, fled like a dastard from the bloodshed and massacre in which he had involved so many thousands of unoffending persons and families. In the debate on the Volunteer Bill, some squibbing took place between him and Mr. Sheridan ; the former observing that long speeches without good materials were dangerous ventures even for a popular man, quoting some doggrel to that effect printed in the American war.

"Solid men of Boston, banish strong potatoes,
Solid men of Boston, make no long orations.
Bow, wow, wow."

When the wit conceiving the first line no less than the second aimed at him, retorted by saying that he remembered another passage from the same approved author.

"Now it hapt to the country he went for a blessing,
And from his state daddy to get a new lesson ;
He went to daddy Jenky, by trimmer Hal attended,
In such company, good lack ! how his morals must be mended.
Bow, wow, wow."

On the 5th of March, he moved for a committee to inspect

the Lords' journals relative to the proceedings on the trial of Mr. Hastings, and to report the facts and their observations thereon to the House. This report, occupying nearly 200 octavo pages, was accordingly made on the 17th of April, and is reputed by those who are presumed to be competent judges of the subject which embraces very important questions in law, one of the most able and elaborate papers that have come from the pen of Mr. Burke. It observes upon the various heads of Jurisdiction of the Lords—Law of Parliament—Rule of Pleading—Publicity of Judges' opinions—Debates on Evidence—Circumstantial Evidence—Practice of the Courts below—and others, as well as on all minor occurrences connected with the impeachment. The chief source of surprise to the reader will be the recondite and various knowledge of legal forms, principles, and history which it exhibits, and which must hereafter make the details a source of interest to the legal profession, upon which it comments with much force and freedom, but without hostility. "This report," says a late lawyer of eminence,* "was penned by Mr. Burke, and may be ranked amongst the most valuable productions of his pen. It turns on a question of the highest importance, both in legislation and jurisprudence—whether in cases for which neither the written nor unwritten law of a nation has provided, courts of law may make a provision for it, by conforming existing laws and principles to it, or by substracting it from their operation. The question occurs on a nice point in the doctrine of testimony; and to this the description in the report principally applies; but it embraces the whole of the subject, and abounds in learning and profound observation; unfortunately its title is far from alluring, and it has therefore been little read." "A short account," adds a modern historian, "of the spirit of this document, and of the principal matters which it contains, is of high importance. It is a criticism not only upon this trial, but upon the law, a thing in this country of great rarity, from a source of high authority. It would also be a thing of great utility, if it would show the people of the country what they have been carefully disciplined not to believe, that no greater service can be rendered to the community than to expose the

* Mr. Charles Butler.

abuses of the law, without which the hope of its amendment is for ever excluded.”*

This report being published without authority in the form of a pamphlet, Lord Thurlow the friend of Hastings in his legal difficulties, laid hold of the opportunity, which the forms of Parliament of not noticing in one House what is said in the other would otherwise have prevented, to vent his indignation in the House of Lords upon a publication, the matter of which he termed “disgraceful and indecent,” “which tended to vilify and misrepresent the conduct of judges and magistrates entrusted with the administration of justice, and the laws of the country.” On the following day (May 23rd), Mr. Burke, in his place, adverted to this attack in a brief and pointed reply, which however imperfect the report of it, is of a masterly description upon a great constitutional question. It is only necessary to give the conclusion here—“Whatever it says, it does not say calumniously. This kind of language belongs to persons whose eloquence entitles them to a free use of epithets. The report states, that the Judges had given their opinions *secretly*, contrary to the almost uninterrupted tenor of parliamentary usage on these occasions. It states that the opinions were given, not upon the *law*, but upon the *case*. It states that the mode of giving the opinions *was unprecedented and contrary to the privileges of the House of Commons*. It states, that the committee did not know *upon what rules and principles the judges had decided upon those cases*, as they neither heard them, nor are they entered upon the journals. It is very true, that we were and are extremely dissatisfied with those opinions, and the consequent determination of the Lords, and we do not think such a mode of proceeding at all justified by the most numerous and best precedents. None of these sentiments are the committee, as I conceive, (and I full little as any of them) disposed to retract or to soften in the smallest degree.

“The report speaks for itself. *Whenever an occasion shall be regularly given to maintain every thing of substance in that paper, I shall be ready to meet the proudest name for ability,*

* Mill's British India, vol. v. pp. 231-2. — Fortunately for the interests of justice, the subject of law reform has been at length vigorously taken up; and it is to be hoped will be unsparingly and vigorously carried out. In this, therefore, as in so many other things, we find Burke in advance of his contemporaries.

learning or rank, that this kingdom contains, upon that subject. Do I say this from any confidence in myself? Far from it! It is from my confidence in our cause, and in the ability, the learning, and the constitutional principles which this House contains within itself, and which I hope it will ever contain, and in the assistance which it will not fail to afford to those who with good intention, do their best to maintain the essential privileges of the House, the ancient law of Parliament, and the public justice of the kingdom."

No one, as may be supposed, felt inclined to take up the gauntlet thrown down in the concluding part of this address. On the 20th of June, Mr. Pitt moved the thanks of the House to the managers "for the faithful management in their discharge of the trust reposed in them," which was carried. Mr. Burke, in the course of his reply, observed with great liberality, that prejudices against himself arising from personal friendship, or personal obligations to the accused, were too laudable for him to be discomposed at. He had thrown no general reflections on the Company's servants; he had merely repeated what Mr. Hastings himself had said of the troops serving in Oude; and the House had marked their opinions of the officers in the very terms he had used. As for the other expressions attributed to him, they had been much exaggerated and misrepresented.

This was the last day he appeared in the House of Commons, having immediately afterwards accepted the Chiltern Hundreds.

To the translation already alluded to made by William Burke, of Brissot's Address, Edmund, though without his name, gave a masterly preface, which from exciting general notice, caused some demand for a book whose name notwithstanding the revolutionary notoriety of the author, is nearly forgotten. This introduction sketches a concise but powerful portrait of the Girondist faction, its principles and progress until overwhelmed and guillotined by that of the Mountain; but particularly of its chiefs, Roland and Brissot.

In the mean time the course of events, which appeared constantly ready to fulfil his predictions, had won over the Duke of Portland and his friends to the opinions of their great political prophet. At the conclusion of the Session in July 1794, the formal junction of the party with Ministry, took place, the Duke receiving a blue riband, the

office of Third Secretary of State with the management of Ireland; Earl Fitzwilliam becoming at first President of the Council and then Lord Lieutenant of that country; Earl Spencer, Lord Privy Seal, and soon afterwards First Lord of the Admiralty; and Mr. Windham, Secretary at War. Lord Loughborough already held the office of Lord Chancellor. The union thus effected from conviction of its being intimately connected with the safety of the country, was stigmatized by the inconsiderate friends of Mr. Fox, as interested desertion of him, their liege lord—an act indeed of moral rebellion against one whom they were politically bound to adhere to and obey. This view of the subject being still occasionally taken, a single retrospective glance at the history of the party may serve to show its untruth—and that he in fact deserted them, and not they him.

It will be recollected that on being dismissed from his connection with Ministry by a contemptuous note from Lord North in 1774, Mr. Fox joined in fact if not in form, that division of opposition of which the Marquis of Rockingham was chief, and Mr. Burke the efficient leader and soul in the House of Commons. His admiration of the latter, which even at this time was unreserved, as well perhaps as a family disinclination to arrange himself under the banners of his father's former adversary Lord Chatham who led the other branch of the Minority, might have strengthened this determination. But in point of fact the Rockingham party contained by far the greater portion of talents, as well as of numbers; in its general principles he professed his warm acquiescence; and it promised the readiest road to power. A direct junction with it was therefore the most obvious step which an ambitious man in furtherance of his own views, could take. Mr. Burke in a friendly, and indeed affectionate letter already alluded to, written to him in Ireland, October 1777, and beginning *My dear Charles*, instead of attempting to bias his choice of political friends by undue persuasion, expressly says "Do not be in haste. Lay your foundations deep in public opinion. Though (as you are sensible) I have never given you the least hint of advice about joining yourself in a declared connexion with our party, nor do I now; yet as I love that party very well, and am clear that you are better able to serve them than any man I know; I wish that things should be so kept as to

leave you mutually very open to one another in all changes and contingencies; and I wish this the rather, because in order to be very great, as I am anxious you should be (always presuming that you are disposed to make a good use of power), you will certainly want some better support than merely that of the crown." The choice of political associates was therefore voluntary, no doubt wisely, at least deliberately, made by Mr. Fox. He acceded to the Rockingham party and to its principles. He dissented from it in no matter of moment; on the contrary acknowledging after the death of the Marquis, the Duke of Portland and Earl Fitzwilliam as the new heads of the connexion, and consulting them on all public measures until the occurrence of the French Revolution, when his views either changed, or when the change became obvious to his coadjutors.

By this time however, he had formed a considerable party of his own. He had gathered around him a number of ingenious and able men, many of them young, some of them almost grown up under his eye in Parliament, who attracted by the splendour of his talents and reputation, eagerly sought his friendship, embraced his opinions, and disregarding or not acknowledging any other influence, looked to him alone as their leader. In return for this attachment he probably found it necessary to accommodate some of his opinions to theirs. The eventful scenes passing in France being well calculated to engage in their favour the ardent feelings of these friends as well as his own to a considerable degree, in addition to the hope of strong popular support, the reaction of such mingled feelings and expectations upon each other probably produced that degree of heat in the cause he had now embraced, and that dissent from his more ancient connections, which had hitherto been evident only on the single question of parliamentary reform. It was also urged by adherents, that his views of public affairs were more on a level with the free spirit of the age than those of Burke, who was represented as fettered by old systems and prejudices, and too strong an adherence to the notions of the aristocracy in matters of government. Whatever be the cause, just at this critical moment Mr. Fox appeared to push to excess in theory, and seeming approval in practice, doctrines which the Old Whigs, as well as others, conceived to be at variance with sound discretion. "In my journey

with them through life," said Burke, "I met Mr. Fox in my road, and I travelled with him very cheerfully as long as he appeared to me to pursue the same direction with those in whose company I set out. In the latter stage of our progress a new scheme of liberty and equality was produced in the world, which either dazzled his imagination, or was suited to some new walks of ambition which were then opened to his view. The whole frame and fashion of his politics appeared to have suffered about that time a very material alteration."

Allegiance being thus virtually withdrawn from the acknowledged heads of the party, they were no longer consulted on any of his measures. In Parliament he treated with asperity or ridicule their opinions and fears for the public safety. Still, with the exception of Mr. Burke and a few others, the majority were unwilling to come to an open rupture; disinclined to quit, they yet knew not how with propriety or satisfaction to themselves to continue to act with him; and it was not one of the least curious anomalies of the time to hear many who gave him their votes and general support in the House, condemn their own votes and all his proceedings in detail, the moment they quitted it. The general belief was, that as time developed the crimes of the revolutionists, so would his views and opinions amend. More than three years' experience however convinced the more influential members that this co-operation was not to be expected. The junction with government therefore took place; but the deliberate consideration that preceded, and the pecuniary arrangements which attended it so far as he was concerned, left him without the slightest cause for complaint. It was therefore incorrect on the part of his partizans to accuse them of deserting him, when the contrary fact was nearer to truth. *They* were the head of the connection; to their system *he* had on ample consideration acceded; and if he found cause to dissent from the general principles which had always influenced their course, the difference could not be justly laid to their charge.

The conduct of this body at the moment displayed anything rather than undue eagerness for power. They had kept aloof for a long period. The first determination of the Duke of Portland and Mr. Windham was *not* to accept of office, believing that more support might be given to

government by an open and uninfluenced vote in Parliament than by becoming officially connected with it—a disinterested and patriotic idea certainly, but not perhaps a very sound conclusion in the business of governing a kingdom. Mr. Burke soon taught them, and was enabled to teach them, better; for long and hardly-earned experience had satisfied him in his own case if in no other, how comparatively useless are the most splendid talents and the best intentions without the possession of power to give them effect. It is to his honour that the handsome annuity settled by the party on Mr. Fox previous to their final separation, met with his warm approval. Several attempts had been previously made by mutual friends to bring these distinguished men to something like their former intimacy; but Burke observed that it would be mere mockery to meet in a formal interview, when their radical differences of political principle, precluded either unity of feeling or of action. “My separation from Mr. Fox,” said he, “is a principle, and not a passion; I hold it a sacred duty while the present disorganizing system continues in operation in Europe, to confirm what I have said and written against it by this sacrifice, and it is no trifling test of my sincerity. To me the loss is great; but to what purpose would be our meeting when our views and conduct continue so essentially at variance? I could take no delight with him, nor he probably with me.”

A calamity now overtook him of the most grievous as well as unexpected description, which all his religion and philosophy were in vain exerted to surmount, and which fell with additional weight from being so shortly preceded by the loss of his brother. This was the death of his son, Mr. Richard Burke, on the 2nd of August, 1794, at the early age of thirty-six. His health, although for some time in an unsettled state, was far from proving a source of serious uneasiness to the fond and sanguine father, who looked forward with pleasure to the moment when, by his own retirement from Parliament, he should be enabled to give him that opportunity for taking part in public affairs to which he conceived his talents in every way equal. Accordingly, immediately after he had vacated his seat, they both proceeded to Malton; and the return of his son for the borough, according to his anxious desire, took place. The latter on the next day, addressed an affectionate letter to

his cousin, now become Mrs. Haviland. "I cannot let this post, which is the first after my election, go out without assuring you of my most affectionate remembrance, and giving you the satisfaction of receiving one of my first franks, as I am sure there is no person who takes a more sincere interest in any good event that can befall me. I should have written to you from London, but that the hurry I was in for some days before I left town rendered it nearly impossible. We have been much gratified by Captain Haviland's constant correspondence from Tonbridge and by your very good letters, which show how little excuse you had for writing so little before. But I see you are resolved to get rid of all your faults, which were, however, neither numerous nor important ones."

The father was further gratified by having him appointed secretary to his friend Earl Fitzwilliam, the new viceroy of Ireland. At a dinner given to several friends on their return to town, he was anticipating for him, wholly unconscious of the impending danger, a brilliant career of service in that country, although the guests present viewed his hectic and disordered countenance with very different emotions. None of these, notwithstanding their intimacy, ventured to express their fears. Neither did the physicians think it prudent to alarm the unsuspecting parent by premature disclosure, in case of the disease which was judged to be incipient decline, proving very lingering; Dr. Brocklesby giving it as his opinion from thorough acquaintance with the strong paternal affection and sensitive feelings of Mr. Burke, that a knowledge of the real nature of the disease and consequent danger, would probably prove fatal to him sooner than to the patient. Cromwell House at Brompton, was however taken by their advice, to be in the air and yet near to town preparatory to his journey to Ireland. Here he became rapidly worse. Concealment being no longer possible, the melancholy truth was at length communicated, just a week before the fatal event occurred, to the afflicted parents; and the father from that time till the fate of his offspring was decided, slept not, scarcely tasted food, or ceased from the most distressing lamentations; seeming to justify the prediction of the physician, that had it been communicated to him sooner his own death might have been the result.

In the closing scene itself there were some circumstances

sufficiently affecting. Of these Dr. French Laurence, the civilian, and afterwards well known in Parliament, the intimate friend of Burke and a constant visitor at his house, must be the historian. Several of his letters, addressed to the senior Mrs. Haviland, descriptive of the melancholy scenes passing in the family exist, evincing all that feeling and commiseration which one generous mind suffers in witnessing the affliction of another, and that other a great and admired man as well as an esteemed friend. He says, (August 1st, 1794,) "My dear Madam—As Dr. King undoubtedly communicated to you the melancholy contents of my yesterday's letter, you will certainly be anxious to know whether another day has brought any new hope. There is a little, feeble and faint. The sentence is at least respired for a time. A second letter from Mr. Burke yesterday in the evening, informed me that the physicians forbade him to despair. At the same time I received a note from Dr. Brocklesby, at whose house I had called, and this morning I have seen him. He says there is no such immediate danger as his father apprehends, but he fears the ultimate event. The disorder is a consumption, which has however not yet actually reached the substance of the lungs, but has spread to the lower part of the trachea, as it is technically called, or the windpipe. It is supposed to have extended as far as the point where the tube divides itself into two branches. The family are with poor Richard in country lodgings a little beyond Brompton. It is a house of mourning indeed, a scene of affliction, Dr. Brocklesby says, almost too much for him, who as a physician is inured to these sights and in some degree callous to them. Mrs. Burke, he says, sustains herself nobly, to keep up the fortitude of her husband. Mr. Burke writes to me that she seeks tranquillity in prayer; he is himself (as he tells me) almost dried up; there is however, in his last letter, plainly a gleam of hope, and a tone of comparative calmness of spirit. The conclusion of his first letter was highly affecting. He ended with an abrupt exclamation, "Oh! my brother died in time."—Some of them wrote to William Burke yesterday; I should otherwise have written. The letter was franked I suppose by poor Richard.—Present my best compliments to all your society. I write in great haste. Adieu."

Again he writes, August 4th, death having unexpectedly occurred in the meantime—

"When I shortly informed you of the melancholy event on Saturday, I was acquainted with the event, and nothing more, from the mouth of Dr. Brocklesby. Some of the particulars I have since collected, as well as I could; and as every little circumstance must be interesting to you, who had known him from his infancy, I shall faithfully relate to you what I have heard. It may afflict you, but there is a pleasure in such sorrow, which he who cannot taste, deserves to be pitied.

"From my former letters to Dr. King and yourself, you know every thing till the night previous to his death. During that night he was restless and discomposed. In the morning his lips were observed to have become black. His voice, however, was better, and for the first time since his attack on the preceding Monday, some asses' milk and some other little sustenance which he took, remained quietly on his stomach. But his father and mother did not suffer themselves to be too much flattered by these favourable symptoms, which might be, what they too surely proved to be in the event. Their lamentations reached him where he lay. He instantly arose from his bed, and to make his emaciated appearance less shocking to his parents, changed his linen and washed himself; he then desired Mr. and Mrs. Webster,* whose tender care of him was unremitting, to support him towards the door of the room where his father and mother were sitting in tears. As soon as he arrived at the door, he exerted himself to spring forward* alone, and treading firmly, (as you remember was his usual mode of walking, but then treading so more studiously for the purpose of convincing his father how little his strength was diminished) he crossed the room to the window, and afterwards to the quarter where they were. He endeavoured to enter into conversation with his father, but grief keeping the latter silent, he said, after some observations on his own condition, "Why, Sir, do you not chide me for these unmanly feelings? I am under no terror; I feel myself better and in spirits, yet my heart flutters I know not why. Pray talk to me, Sir; talk of religion, talk of morality, talk if you will on indifferent subjects." Then turning round, he asked, "What noise is that? Does it rain? Oh! no; it is the

* Old and faithful servants in the family.

rustling of the wind through the trees;" and immediately with a voice as clear as ever in his life, with the most correct and impressive delivery, and a more than common ease and grace of action, he repeated three beautiful lines from Adam's morning hymn in Milton. You will certainly anticipate me in the lines; they are favourite lines of his father's, and were so, as I recollect, of his poor uncle, to whom he was then going with these very lines on his tongue.

"His praise, ye winds, that from four quarters blow,
Breathe soft or loud; and wave your tops, ye pines,
With ev'ry plant in sign of worship wave."

He began again, and again pronounced the verses with the same happiness of elocution and gesture, waved his head in sign of worship, and worshipping, sunk into the arms of his parents as in a profound and sweet sleep.

"Afflicted as I have been for this year past with the apprehension of this calamity, I now on calm consideration thank God for all the circumstances of his end; since his departure was fixed in the inscrutable purposes of Providence. I thank God, that his father and mother did not seriously feel his danger till the last week of his life; I thank Him that they had some short time of preparation; and I thank Him also that they were not doomed for whole months, as the physician had expected, to languish and consume themselves with unavailing sorrow over a beloved, and justly beloved son, dying by inches before their eyes.

"The behaviour of our two poor remaining friends is such as might be expected from them by those who rightly know both their sensibility and strength of reason: though perhaps for the exertion of the latter under so severe a dispensation, we hardly gave them sufficient credit. During the first day, the father was at times, as I have heard, truly terrible in his grief. He occasionally worked himself up to an agony of affliction, and then bursting away from all control, would rush to the room where his son lay, and throw himself headlong, as it happened, on the body, the bed, or the floor. Yet at intervals he attended and gave directions relative to every little arrangement, which their situation rendered necessary, pleasing himself most with thinking what would be most consonant to the living wishes and affections of his lost son. At intervals too he would argue

against the ineffectual sorrow of his wife. She, on the other hand, sometimes broke into fits of violent weeping, sometimes showed a more quiet but a more determined grief, and at other times again a more serene composure than her husband. Instead of dashing herself down, like him, she only lamented, that when on Thursday, by an accidental fall, she sprained her wrist, 'it had not been her neck:' but when her husband attempted to persuade her, that she had no business still to remain in the house, she answered steadily, 'No, Edmund; while he remains here I will not go.' I am happy, however, to inform you that on Saturday evening she took and gave a promise that neither of them would ever enter more the chamber where their son lay. They have repented; both however have fulfilled their mutual promises, and she has consented, notwithstanding her resolution above mentioned, to leave the house this day.

"This letter is longer than I intended, or than my time can well afford. But you, I am sure, will not think it too minute: you will rather find ten thousand omissions of things, into which you would inquire: and I perhaps could have added many things, if I had stopped to consider what I should write. Yet on the whole, if I can trust the information of Mr. and Mrs. Nugent and Mrs. Carey, compared with what I received from the servant of our departed friend, I believe I have given you a sufficiently correct notion in general of the circumstances attending the fatal event, as well as the present situation of things in that miserable ruin of a family. On Saturday, I understand, that I shall probably be at Beaconsfield.—Oh! God! on what an occasion!—perhaps for the last time, except in transient visits to those friends there, whom I shall ever esteem."

"P.S. I have just received a note from Dr. King. He says, 'none or little change yet for the better.' Dupont, who brought it to me, tells me that after poor Richard sunk down, he was undressed, and put to bed, where poor Jane Burke, rubbing him with vinegar, or any other such vain methods of recalling his fleeting spirit, received one last sigh, and with her own hand then closed his eyes for ever."

On the 7th August he says:—

"At last I have seen poor Burke. His grief was less intolerable than I had supposed. He took me by surprise,

or I should *then* have avoided him. He told me he was bringing his mind by degrees to his miserable situation, and he lamented that he went to see his son after death, as the dead countenance has made such an impression on his imagination that he cannot retrace in his memory the features and air of his living Richard. He did not stay long in the room, but from Dr. King, whom I also saw last night for the first time, I learned more particulars. He confirmed the accounts which I gave you in my former letters, with some slight differences. His father was alone in the room when he walked in as I informed you, but the subsequent conversation did not pass there. After staying a very short time, poor Richard returned to his bed-chamber and laid himself on his bed. It was then the conversation took place in presence of both his parents, and when he asked if it rained, his father, and not himself, explained what the cause really was—the wind rustling through the trees. On which, after twice repeating the lines from Milton, he sunk into the arms of his parents, and a short struggle ensuing, Mrs. Burke was prevailed upon to retire, till Dr. King announced to her that all was over. Yesterday, for the first time, Mr. and Mrs. Burke ate their dinner; but he with more appetite comparatively than she did. He has in general slept pretty well. She I believe not so well. William Burke has come, but has not yet seen them. He weeps like a child.

“I went or sent yesterday to all the newspapers, and got promises that the paragraph* should not be inserted. At one place I learn that it actually was cut out for the purpose of being inserted. At the Herald office I was told that it came from a correspondent in the country, and that it was in a female hand-writing. They assured me that they would stop and send to me any thing in future communicated to them on the same subject, if any such should reach them; at the same time they observed that they could not answer that they might not put in paragraphs from the same quarter, which being distant allusions, they might not understand, though the lady and

* The purport of this paragraph does not appear, but it probably related to some of the circumstances connected with the loss the family had just experienced.

myself, as well as our friends, might very well know what was meant."

A few days afterwards (12th August) some further particulars are given.

"At last I have had the pleasure (I may truly say under the circumstances), of seeing our dear Mrs. Burke; and I have the satisfaction of informing you that I found her better than I was taught to expect. After the first meeting she was more composed than he, or she played her part more naturally in order not to discompose him. When I separated from her arms, he took me by the hand, and spoke to me with a tone of artificial and laborious fortitude: she saw through the disguise and gently reproved him for not supporting himself as he promised. She entered occasionally with apparent sincerity into some of the topics of consolation, upon which I touched a little, when any expressions of his seemed to render them necessary; and occasionally she took part in the general topics of conversation which were introduced. But once when he had walked to the other end of the room, and once when he was reading to himself, she raised her hands and cast upward at the same time a piteous look of silent affliction. His mind seemed to be more fully engaged than hers by the general conversation, but he had frequent, though not excessive bursts of grief. I was very much delighted with one thing which I heard. Mrs. Burke, who for three nights had taken a gentle opiate, omitted it on Sunday night, and slept well without it. She assured me too that the complaint in her limbs was at present better. I was told by him, that they had read a good deal in the course of the day, which I very much approved. On my asking when they would go into the country, she turned to him, who answered, whenever she pleased. She then said some time in the course of the week. I expressed a desire to go with them, but she only said, without any direct yes or no, that they should have some business. At parting, he begged me to come as much to him as I could. It was however so much the request of poor William and Mrs. Nugent at Beaconsfield that I would come, that my plan is at all events to come to you for a few days; or if the Captain and Mrs. Thomas Haviland take up their abode with you, then to take possession of his house. I can then be at Butler's Court

all the day or the greatest part of it, as may be useful and most convenient. I beg you will not think it necessary to give yourself the trouble of an answer, but arrange things at your discretion for the best against Thursday, or whatever day we may come."

Next day he finished this distressing detail by the following:—

"Yesterday evening I was happy again to learn that our poor Jane Burke had slept well without the aid of medicine. Mr. Burke was somewhat lower, which a little affected her, but I think it was only the natural progress of his grief, settling regularly from sudden bursts mingled with intervals of forced composure, into a more even and sober melancholy. They talked of removing to Butler's Court on Friday, but said nothing inviting me with them. I shall therefore come, and on reflection, to Captain Haviland's house, as I bring papers with me to occupy my leisure minutes. If I should not see your son, I presume you have authority sufficient to give me possession. As you heard the contents of a letter* which I wrote from your house, I hold it due to my truly noble friend that you should also know the answer. It bears in every respect the express image of his mind. He explains to me his silence when Dr. W. King mentioned to him his letter to Lord ——. He says that he never has asked Lord ——, or any friend of his own who possesses the same sort of parliamentary interest, and makes the same use of it that Lord —— does, a syllable respecting the destination of it. And this is a fixed principle with him. This was the reason of his taking no immediate notice of what Dr. King told him. He then passes to the general part of my letter, and informs me, 'He is glad to know that Parliament is my wish, because he will endeavour to contribute to its accomplishment, although he cannot speak with precision as to the mode or time of effecting it, and he hopes it is useless to assure me that he cannot have a greater pleasure than in testifying to me and the world the friendship which he feels for me.' It gives me the most lively satisfaction on reflection, to be able to say, that what I expressed in my letter to him I sincerely felt. I had no

* To Mr. Burke; which expressed his wish to get into Parliament, and remotely hinted at the exertion of his influence to aid him in the attempt.

doubt of his friendship—I write in great haste.—Adieu till we meet.”

The son thus deeply lamented had always conducted himself with so much filial duty and affection towards both parents, and especially in soothing the unavoidable irritations to which his father was subjected by the prominent part he took in public affairs, as to sharpen the natural feelings of sorrow of the parent, by reflecting that he had also lost a counsellor and friend. Their confidence on all subjects was even more unreserved than commonly prevails between father and son, and their esteem for each other if possible higher. The son looked to the father as one of the first, if not the very first, character in history. The father had formed the very highest opinion of the talents of the son, and among his friends rated them superior to his own. He had enlarged the house at Beaconsfield for his particular pursuits and accommodation; he consulted him for some years before his death on almost every subject whether of a public or private nature that occurred; and very often followed his judgment in preference to his own where they happened to differ. The deceased possessed much knowledge, firmness and decision of character, united with strict integrity of mind. The loss of such a companion and confidant; the unexpected and irremediable destruction of hopes entertained of his advancement and fame, and as an only child, the consequent extinction of the hopes of descendants to continue his name, was naturally felt with excessive poignancy. It shook his frame so fearfully, that though the intellectual energies continued unimpaired, his bodily powers rapidly declined. He never afterwards could bear to look toward Beaconsfield Church, the place of interment; nor was this beloved son for any length of time ever *absent from his mind excepting when engaged in literary composition*, which therefore became rather a relief than labour. *The Bishop of Meath (O’Beirne) used to say, that the first time he had an opportunity of seeing him after the melancholy event, he was shocked to observe the change produced in his appearance. The countenance displayed traces of decay and of extreme mental anguish, the chest had obviously sunk, and altogether exhibited the appearance of one bowed down both in frame and in spirit by the severest affliction.*

Nearly all his private letters and publications written after

this time contain many and pathetic allusions to his loss; and in conversation were still more frequent. He called the departed "the hope of his house," "the prop of his age," "his other and better self." Writing to a relative on the birth of a son, he said, "may he live to be the staff of your age, and close your eyes in peace, instead of, like me, reversing the order of nature and having the melancholy office to close *his*." To Mr. (the late Baron) Smith he writes: "So heavy a calamity has fallen upon me as to disable me for business and to disqualify me for repose. The existence I have I do not know that I can call life * *. Good nights to you—I never can have any." In a private letter to the same gentleman, he says, "Yes; the life which has been so embittered cannot long endure. The grave will soon close over me and my dejections." To Sir Hercules Langrishe he talks of the remainder of his "short and cheerless existence in this world." To Lord Auckland, he says, "For myself or for my family (alas! I have none) I have nothing to hope or to fear in this world." The *Letter to a noble Lord* speaks of the "sorrows of a desolate old man." And again, "The storm has gone over me; and I lie like one of those old oaks which the late hurricane has scattered about me. I am stripped of all my honours; I am torn up by the roots and lie prostrate on the earth." "I am alone. I have none to meet my enemies in the gate. I greatly deceive myself if in this hard season of life I would give a peck of refuse wheat for all that is called fame and honour in the world." To Mr. William Elliot, he writes, "desolate at home, stripped of my boast, my hope, my consolation, my helper, my counsellor, and my guide. You know in part what I have lost, and would to God I could clear myself of all neglect and fault in that loss," and numberless others of a similar sorrowful import are scattered through his subsequent writings. It was a matter of small consideration that except for this heavy affliction Mr. Burke was to have been raised to the honours of the peerage; but infirm, childless, and desponding, every feeling of ambition became extinguished in his breast as the preceding expressions plainly intimate. Notwithstanding this, perhaps the honour should have been bestowed and accepted. It would have been a satisfaction if not to himself, at least to his friends and to his admirers as a testimony of national gratitude to a man

of such singular and varied talents exerted with extraordinary vigour in every department of the public service; and as a passport to the greater favour and consideration of that numerous class of the community (and those too not of the least rank or influence), who would estimate at a very different value the exertions and services of plain Mr. Burke, and those of Lord Burke or Lord Beaconsfield.

In person, young Burke was neither so tall nor so muscular as his father, but well formed and active, his features smaller and more delicate, though handsome and expressive, supposed to bear some resemblance to those of his uncle Richard, and his complexion florid. A picture of him by Sir Joshua Reynolds is an admirable likeness, "as exact," said a literary lady, a friend of the family, who saw it at the painter's before it was sent home, "as the reflection of a mirror." From this portrait his father, soon after his death, caused a print to be engraved, which preserves much of the spirit of the original. Underneath it, after his name, age, and the date of his death, are the following lines, altered in a slight degree from Dryden's elegiac poem of Eleonora—

"As precious gums are not for common fire,
They but perfume the temple and expire;
So was he soon exhaled and banished hence,
A short sweet odour at a vast expense."

Adding to these, as at once characteristic of his grief and his pride,

"O dolor atque decus."*

An affectionate but not overchanged character of his friend—for whom Opposition said the Clerkship of the Pells had been once designed—was drawn up for the newspapers by Dr. Walker King. Letters of sympathy and condolence came in from many quarters, among the more distinguished of which were those of the Comte D'Artois, Count De Serent,

* He was disposed to believe in some indisposition on the part of those in power to bring his son forward in public life. The hint is dropped in the letter to Mr. William Elliot, 1796. "Had it pleased Providence to have -pared him for the trying situations that seem to be coming on, notwithstanding that he was sometimes a little *dispirited by the disposition which we thought shown to depress him and set him aside*; yet he was always buoyed up again; and on one or two occasions, he discovered what might be expected from the vigour and elevation of his mind, from his unconquerable fortitude, and from the extent of his resources for every purpose of speculation and of action."

Earl Fitzwilliam, Mr. Grattan, Mr. Windham, and other acquaintance in political life. Several were deterred from expressing their feelings by the pain to the parent inseparable from touching on such a subject, or in the expressive words of Count De Serent—"I felt that though I had inclination, I had no right to mix my grief with yours. I stood mute before the grief of a father!"

Toward the earlier part of this year, he had been summoned by the Duke of Portland to a meeting of Old Whigs to discuss public affairs in relation to their conduct in Parliament and to Government. His general correspondence does not appear to have been extensive. To Mr. Windham, he wrote, condemning the non-employment of Frenchmen for French objects; to Mrs. Crewe on the state of the emigrants; to his son expressing some hope that Fox may join the *moderates* of the Whigs, though "the last thing in the world which Fox will do is to reconcile himself to me,"—and to Mr. Woodford, who communicated to him for consideration a paper alleged to contain the sentiments of Mr. Fox on the cause and principles of the war, though Burke doubted whether it was expressly meant for his eye or not. He sees however, he says, no material variation in it from that gentleman's former opinions; he does not wish him for an adversary, but cannot agree for a moment in his belief that peace is or was practicable; and then restates his own opinion, so remarkably fulfilled by its deadly nature and progress—"cannot persuade myself that this war bears any the least resemblance, other than it is a war, to any that has ever existed in the world. I cannot persuade myself that any examples or any reasonings drawn from other wars and other politics are at all applicable to it; and I truly and sincerely think that all other wars and all other politics have been the games of children in comparison to it."

CHAPTER XIV.

Rumoured appointment to the Provostship of Trinity College, Dublin—Bishop of Auxerre—Grant of a Pension—Correspondence with Mr. William Smith—Second Letter to Sir Hercules Langrishe—Letter to Mr. William Elliott—Letters to Mrs. Haviland—Letter to Lord Auckland—Thoughts on Scarcity—Anecdotes—Letter to a Noble Lord.

EXTREME as was the grief or rather despair for an only and beloved son, efforts were not wanting on his own part

to overcome it. One of the first arose from a general rumour in Ireland regarding himself, that of the intention of Ministers being to make him Provost of Trinity College, Dublin. He immediately wrote off to Mr. Windham to say, that were such design even intended, he would not accept it—that no favour or arrangement of Government should give it to any one out of the body of Fellows—and then “for a thousand reasons, only to an ecclesiastic.” Such an office, he reiterated to the Duke of Portland, should never be made as it had been made, and as most things in Ireland were made, a job—and that the recommendation of the members of the Collegiate body, not that of the local administration, should alone determine the choice. Some letters on this subject were also exchanged with Grattan.

Strong no less in grateful than in other feelings, he understood about this time that the Bishop of Auxerre, who, as we have seen, had been kind to his son in France more than twenty years before, was with his brother Viscount De Cicé and nephews, as emigrants, pressed for the means of existence. He contrived, however, amid his own serious straits to send one of them (Abbé De La Bintiunaye) fifty pounds—confessing to having raised the money with difficulty. In real life, as in fiction, we sometimes meet with the due fulfilment of poetical justice; and the present proved one of these agreeable occasions. Nearly at the moment of performing this act of generosity, a letter arrived from Mr. Pitt, announcing in the following terms the consideration extended by the Crown to his long and meritorious service.—

“Downing Street, August 30th, 1794.

“DEAR SIR,—I have received the King’s permission to acquaint you that it is His Majesty’s intention to propose to Parliament in the next Session to enable His Majesty to confer on you an annuity more proportioned to His Majesty’s sense of your public merit than any which His Majesty can at present grant; but being desirous in the interval not to leave you without some, though inadequate mark of the sentiments and dispositions which His Majesty entertains towards you, he has further directed me to prepare an immediate grant out of the Civil list of £1200 per annum (being the largest sum which His Majesty is entitled to fix) either in your own name or in that of Mrs. Burke as may be most

agreeable to you. I shall be happy to learn your decision on this subject, that I may have the satisfaction of taking the necessary steps for carrying His Majesty's intentions into immediate execution.—I have the honour to be, with great esteem and regard, dear Sir, your most faithful and obedient servant,
W. PITT."

A second communication about three weeks afterward mentions that the annuity should commence from January, 1793; and that as the remaining part of the arrangement required the sanction of Parliament—"it will be a very honourable and gratifying part of my duty to take the first opportunity of conveying the King's recommendation for carrying it into effect." The intention thus voluntarily announced by the Minister—for no application whatever had been made on the part of Mr. Burke—he did not exactly fulfil;—on what account is not known. But he advised the King to grant in lieu of the Parliamentary provision, £2500 per annum in annuities for lives payable out of the West Indian four and a half per cent fund, then at the disposal of the Crown, in order to enable Mr. Burke to discharge some serious debts contracted during a long course of important though unrequited public duties. The measure was not finally settled till October, 1795. His Majesty, not Mr. Pitt, is said to have been its first proposer. But the manner in which it came, formed no object of consideration with the party holding opposite political views. The simple fact of being accepted was deemed sufficient to justify unworthy animadversion in Parliament; while from the less respectable portion of party writers in newspapers and pamphlets came rancorous abuse and the most ungenerous imputations, persevered in long after his death, and even to a recent period by the more furious and irreclaimable revolutionary spirits of the day.

It was in vain to urge that it had been deserved by lengthened and very remarkable public services—by personal disinterestedness on many occasions—by surrendering about £20,000 per annum as his perquisites from the Pay Office—by his economical Reform bill which for twelve years past had saved the country nearly £80,000 annually in hard money, as well as the extinction of offices which might have been converted to undue influence in Parliament—by reformation of the Pay Office in guarding against serious deficits so frequently experienced there, and rendering available to

the public service about £100,000, the frequent amount of the balance in hand—and if for nothing else, by his exertions against the revolutionary opinions of the day ; which in the general belief warded off the most imminent peril with which the constitution of the country had been threatened since the time of James II. These latter labours however, so different are political tastes, seemed to constitute his sole offence in the eyes of former coadjutors and admirers. They had no other charge indeed to allege against him : and the acceptance of the pension was considered as the consummation of the crime. The heat of the moment caused them to forget that a pension is the usual and most open and honourable mode of rewarding great abilities devoted to the advancement of public good : that if receiving it were a proof of corruption, few of their own friends at that moment but were equally corrupt ; and that in fact tried by this standard of purity, there was scarcely a single honest public name not excepting Lord Chatham himself, to be found in our annals. Against those effusions of irritation rather than of good sense, good feeling, or sound argument, Mr. Burke had to place a public life of thirty years of unsullied purity, which, in the language of an eminent Whig when alluding to the fact, “was proof against his own embarrassed circumstances.”

The effects of clamour and abuse, right or wrong, when perseveringly continued, are for a time not inconsiderable. Some even of his admirers began to doubt the propriety of accepting the boon, among whom was the anonymous author of the “Pursuits of Literature,” who though convinced, as he said, that no man ever better or possibly so well deserved public reward, seems inclined to think he ought not to have received it, in order to avoid the possibility of imputation upon his motives. This is a refinement of fastidiousness not to be looked for, scarcely to be desired, in the affairs of the world ; and which if attended to, would preclude most public servants from experiencing any thing like public gratitude. If a statesman has honourably earned reward ; if it be honourably offered to his acceptance ; and if he be from the nature of his private circumstances really in want of it, why it may be asked should the benefit not be received ? Would it not indicate weakness rather than strength of mind to be frightened from it by vulgar abuse, or by waiting to obtain that which never was, and never can be received by any man

—universal assent to his deserts? Or is it meant to be maintained, that the insignificant in talents, the worthless and inefficient members of the state, or those who are already rich and do not want it, are alone to profit by the public bounty? “The word pension,” said Lord Macartney, a statesman of experience and of unspotted integrity even in India when India was a hot bed of temptation even to sturdy virtue, “gives great offence to some gentlemen; but for my part I have lived too much in the world to suffer myself to be imposed upon by a word or a name. In every other country of Europe, a pension is considered the most honourable recompense which a subject can enjoy—I speak of free countries, such for instance as Sweden.* * * A pension is infinitely more honourable than a sinecure office: the one loudly speaks its meaning, but the other hypocritically lurks under a supposition of duty where there is nothing to do.” His Lordship might have added, that however customary in England to rail against pensions whether well or ill bestowed, most men when they have the opportunity find it convenient to accept them.

For some months after his afflicting loss, the mind of Mr. Burke was too seriously hurt to take so active an interest as hitherto in most questions connected with public affairs; nor did his friends deem it decorous to intrude upon the privacies of a grief so profound by solicitations for his opinion. But as time began to work its usual influence, return to the consideration of things which had long been a species of daily aliment to him, was eagerly desired as serving to counteract the intrusion of more melancholy thoughts. His direct communications with Ministry however, in a great degree ceased with the life of his son, his influence on general opinion being now exerted through the influential channel of the press, and therefore wholly public.

The question of Roman Catholic Emancipation occupied then a large share of the attention of the statesmen of England and Ireland. In the latter country, as being chiefly concerned in the result, it was necessarily more warmly debated. The late concessions there, the continued exertions of Mr. Grattan, and the inflammatory state of politics even in England, altogether producing in many a conviction of its necessity; in others as strong an aversion to any further indulgence. An appeal to Mr. Burke from several friends

in Dublin whose opinions were either not fully formed, or who wished their doubts on the matter entirely resolved, was therefore made. Among the number was his young friend, Mr. William Smith. He had now secured a seat in the legislature of his country; and being further placed in the not uncommon position in Ireland of having one parent of the Protestant and the other of the Roman Catholic faith, and brought up a Protestant himself, he considered it no less desirable than just to gain from such a man all the additional light that could be thrown upon the subject, in order to be himself enabled to act wisely and conscientiously towards his religion, towards his parent as one of the less favoured persuasion, and towards his country.

The letter penned on this occasion he was good enough to communicate to the writer of this work. It enters fully into the subject, with great ability and freedom from undue bias; but the settlement of that important question after some editions of this work had been published, precludes the necessity of detailed notice here further than as an incident in the life of his great correspondent, to whom he says—"I am about to make a very usual return for great kindness, by imposing a further tax on him from whom I have received it. The funds however on which I draw, whatever modesty or prudence may induce you to allege, are universally known to be abundant. Besides, what I ask for is advice; in giving which you can enrich me without impoverishing yourself."

The reply of Mr. Burke bears date January 29th, 1795, and being handed about in Dublin, found its way into the press, though without permission of the writer or his correspondent. He does not enter into the question with all the minuteness perhaps which was solicited, but gives his views upon it generally, and pleads for the removal of the whole of the disabilities of the Roman Catholic body. Speaking of their religion, he applies to it the language and consideration of statesmen—that as the faith of four-fifths of the community of the country it should not be hostilely treated—that as a thing in itself irremovable by either force or possibly persuasion, it should be the business of wisdom not to bicker and contend with, but to make the most of it. He urges unanimity upon the Christian world as now more than ever necessary when the foundations of Christianity itself were attacked; and that were it possible to dispute, rail, and persecute the

Roman Catholics out of their prejudices, it is not probable they would take refuge in ours, but rather in an indifference to all religion; and that were the Catholic religion destroyed by infidels, it is absurd to suppose that the Protestant church could long endure. "All the principal religions in Europe," he says, "stand upon one common bottom. The support, that the whole, or the favoured parts, may have in the secret dispensations of Providence, it is impossible to say; but humanly speaking, they are all *prescriptive* religions. They have all stood long enough to make prescription, and its chain of legitimate prejudices, their main stay. The people, who compose the four grand divisions of Christianity, have now their religion as an habit, and upon authority, and not on disputation; as all men, who have their religion derived from their parents and the fruits of education *must* have it; however the one, more than the other, may be able to reconcile his faith to his own reason, or to that of other men."

The measures of concession meant to benefit Ireland by the new Lord Lieutenant Earl Fitzwilliam, being disapproved by the English ministry, the disagreement unhappily produced his recall; and the ferment occasioned by this impolitic act ultimately terminated in the rebellion. The dislike of the King to favour Romanists was probably stronger than that of Ministers, though less known or not publicly avowed until a subsequent period. Heated discussions were in the mean time carried on in Dublin in public assemblages of the Catholics and anti-Catholics; the former in Francis-street, the latter in College Green. A warm debate on the subject had likewise taken place in the Irish House of Commons. In this situation Mr. Burke wrote his *Second Letter to Sir Hercules Langrishe* who had sent him his speech on the occasion, in which several new arguments are urged to support the view of it which he and his friend the baronet had taken. His feelings on the change in the Irish administration were of the most desponding nature,—and much more in private conversation than he thought proper to publish. "I really thought," he writes in this letter, "that in the total of the late circumstances with regard to persons, to things, to principles, and to measures, was to be found a conjuncture favourable to the introduction and to the perpetuation of a general harmony, producing a general strength,

which to that hour Ireland was never so happy as to enjoy. My sanguine hopes are blasted ; I must consign my feelings on that terrible disappointment to the same patience in which I have been obliged to bury the vexation I suffered on the defeat of the other great, just, and honourable causes, in which I have had some share ; and which have given more of dignity than of peace and advantage to a long and laborious life."

Immediately after this letter had been dispatched he thought it necessary to defend himself from an attack of the Duke of Norfolk in the House of Lords, who in the debate concerning Earl Fitzwilliam, took occasion to advert to him by name as the cause of that nobleman's secession from the party. The number, variety, and magnitude of Mr. Burke's talents, he said, were known, and he fully admitted them all ; but they had not been put to a right use. By the book which he had published he had provoked dangerous replies, particularly that of Mr. Paine ; yet he continued to wage war against Whig principles and against the spirit and the securities of freedom. The answer, which is couched in a strain of sarcastic humour, forms a *Letter to William Elliot, Esq.* He confesses he is somewhat obstinate in adhering to the opinions and party with which he set out in life, instead of being lectured into the new opinions of a new party, some of whom were not born into the world and all the others were children, when he entered into the connexion—that he continues somewhat purblind to the blessings of French freedom, and must persevere in the path he had chosen, that is, to try to save his Grace, and persons like his Grace, from themselves.—"I admit, indeed, that my praises of the British government, loaded with all its incumbrances ; clogged with its peers and its beef ; its parsons and its pudding ; its commons and its beer, and its dull slavish liberty of going about just as one pleases, had something to provoke a jockey of Norfolk, who was inspired with the resolute ambition of becoming a citizen of France."

Adverting to the toasts, witticisms, and allusions frequently made to him by the political clubs and associations of the day, as well as in the speeches of Mr. Erskine in the late trials for high treason and on other occasions at the bar, he gives the reins to his fancy. "Mr. Erskine supplied

something, I allow, from the stores of his imagination, in metamorphosing the jovial toasts of clubs, into solemn special arguments at the bar. So far the thing showed talent: however I must still prefer the bar of the tavern to the other bar. The toasts at the first hand were better than the arguments at the second. Even when the toasts began to grow old as sarcasms, they were washed down with still older pricked election port; then the acid of the wine made some amends for the want of any thing piquant in the wit. But when his Grace gave them a second transformation, and brought out the vapid stuff which had wearied the clubs and disgusted the courts: the drug made up of the bottoms of rejected bottles, all smelling so woefully of the cork and the cask and of every thing except the honest old lamp, and when that sad draught had been farther infected with the gaol pollution of the Old Bailey, and was dashed and brewed, and ineffectually stunned again into a senatorial exordium in the House of Lords, I found all the high flavour and mantling of my honours, tasteless, flat, and stale. Unluckily, the new tax on wine is felt even in the greatest fortunes, and his Grace submits to take up with the heel-taps of Mr. Erskine."

About this time he had to lament another family affliction in the death of Major Haviland the husband of his niece, who having accompanied his regiment, the 45th, to the West Indies (from a sense of duty, contrary to the wishes of his family), died at Martinique, just at the moment when gazetted colonel. Mrs. Haviland, who remained at home, received the melancholy intelligence of being a widow before she became a mother. To this sad event the following letter of Mr. Burke adverts, which—among several others—were addressed to the senior Mrs. Haviland.

"MY DEAREST MADAM,—You know that I partake from the very bottom of my soul the affliction you suffer. It is not my relation to him, and through him to you, that alone affects me. I loved him as a friend, and I loved you as a friend, both of you most sincerely, before we had any other connexion: but sorrow and suffering are our lot; and the same God who makes the dispensation, must be our comfort under it. As to the excellent poor creature here who approaches to her time very nearly, we cannot possibly trust her with what I fear too much is the real state of her case.

She is far advanced, and if she hears it before she gets to town and has help at hand, I think it may be death to her, so we thank you most cordially for the cold.* She was dressed; and nothing else could hinder her going to you. May the Almighty strengthen us all, and bow us in this and in all things to his wise disposal. May every blessing attend you. Adieu, and believe me ever faithfully and affectionately yours, and Mrs. Aston's sincere friend and obliged humble servant,

EDMUND BURKE.

"Mrs. Burke is to you both with all her usual affection."

He addresses Mrs. Haviland again about 7th or 8th of August.—"I waited to see how things turned out with your poor child before I troubled you on the subject. A melancholy one it is to us all. She was not made acquainted with her irreparable loss until yesterday morning. She had from our manner been prepared to expect bad news of some kind or other; and the unfortunate business was opened so gradually that though grief beyond expression was caused by it (a thing inevitable in a case of so heavy a loss falling on so much sensibility) yet there was nothing of surprise. An agony of sorrow continued the whole day; and her night was not good. Dr. Poinan, in whom she has much confidence, has seen her since, and he had been previously consulted. He was of opinion that the communication might be more safely made to her before her lying in, than after or very near the time. It was impossible to conceal it, even had it been advisable so to do, for many days longer. He is not apprehensive of danger in the least degree." And after the birth of her son he thus writes to his niece, "September 4, 1795. My dear little Mary,—Your aunt goes to London to see you. I cannot attend her,† else you may be sure I should have great comfort in seeing you and your little one. But I cannot let her go without telling you that I love you very dearly; and that it is my earnest prayer to Almighty God that you may live long and happily; and that you may see your son‡ a support to your old age; an

* An excuse made by Mrs. Haviland, to avoid an interview with her daughter-in-law, just after the news of her son's loss had arrived.

† The cause was a visit to Mr. Burke, from some members of the royal family of France:—Louis XVIII. and the Dukes de Berri and D'Angoulême.

‡ The late Mr. Thomas Haviland Burke.

honour and satisfaction to you, and an useful man to his friends and country ; and that at a very long day *he* may close *your* eyes, not as I have done those of your admirable cousin. Adieu, my dear child ! my most cordial congratulations."

His finances we have seen, being far from flourishing at any time, as his friends very well knew, a pecuniary offer made at this period by Mrs. Haviland, when aware that her friend was suffering under temporary difficulty, was thankfully but firmly declined and returned. A cordial note signed by *Jane and Edmund Burke* objects to the amount were even assistance necessary, and he promises that if eventually wanted it will be applied for. The occasion of the offer was a projected journey to Bath, which having been formerly useful to both, was again expected to produce remedial effects. This friendly consideration again draws forth their sympathies for the loss of Major Haviland, and while offering those of his wife, adds pathetically, "As I do very truly, as much as an old heart worn out with affliction can do."

Toward the end of October, (28th), Mr. Burke received a polite note from Lord Auckland, dated Eden Farm, Kent, saying that "though in the stormy ocean of the last twenty-three years they had seldom sailed on the same tack, there had been nothing hostile in their signals or manœuvres, and on his part at least a strong disposition toward friendly and respectful sentiments. Under a similar influence now, he begged leave to send him a small work which exhibited his fair and full opinions on the arduous circumstances of the moment." The reply sent to his lordship two days afterward, wholly dissents from the views exhibited in this pamphlet, and expresses that dissent in unequivocal terms. The first portion of it displays a desponding and querulous tone, resulting from private grief or contemplation of public calamity, from the ill success of our own or the arms of our allies against republican France on the Continent, where alone, not in the colonies, he said, success was most to be desired. The phrase "Buried in the anticipated grave of a feeble old age, forgetting and forgotten" must therefore be taken as words of course. They could not, with truth, be applied to one whose mental energies were constantly acting through the press in as strong and bright a manner as they ever had done ; whose doctrines were in constant discussion ;

whose name was daily bandied about in every form of publication from the newspaper to the quarto, a theme of alternate praise and censure even much more than most of the ministers of the country; and from whose thoughts public topics were scarcely ever for a moment absent.

"In this retreat," he says, "I have nothing relative to this world to do but to study all the tranquillity that in the state of my mind I am capable of. To that end I find it but too necessary to call to my aid an oblivion of most of the circumstances pleasant and unpleasant of my life; to think as little, and indeed to know as little as I can of every thing that is doing about me; and above all, to divert my mind from all presagings and prognostications of what I must (if I let my speculations loose) consider as of absolutely necessity to happen after my death, and possibly even before it. Your address to the public which you have been so good as to send to me, obliges me to break in upon that plan, and to look a little on what is behind, and very much on what is before me. It creates in my mind a variety of thoughts, and all of them unpleasant."

The work thus sent and acknowledged was intended to be published in London on the same day. Its main purpose was to insinuate, for nothing was distinctly recommended, the propriety of peace with France—that the thing was desirable, and the moment favourable. Both propositions are refuted by his correspondent with much sarcastic humour and vigour of reasoning in the "*Fourth Letter on a Regicide Peace*," addressed to Earl Fitzwilliam which though published only in his posthumous works, was the first of the series begun on that subject. Lord Auckland therefore has the merit indirectly, of having been the occasion of writing these celebrated essays. Their opinions, it will be observed, were nearly as opposite as they had been on the American war; and on both subjects it will not require much deliberation to decide to whom is to be given the palm of superior sagacity.—"A piece has been sent to me," he says in the letter just mentioned, "called '*Remarks on the apparent Circumstances of the War in the Fourth Week of October, 1795*,' with a French motto—*Que faire encore une fois dans une telle nuit?—Attendre le jour*. The very title seemed to me striking and peculiar, and to announce something uncommon. In the time I have lived to, I always seem to

walk on enchanted ground. Every thing is new, and according to the fashionable phrase, revolutionary. In the former days authors valued themselves upon the maturity and fullness of their deliberations. Accordingly they predicted (perhaps with more arrogance than reason) an eternal duration to their works. The quite contrary is our present fashion. Writers value themselves now on the instability of their opinions, and the transitory life of their productions. On this kind of credit the modern institutors open their schools. They write for youth, and it is sufficient if the instruction 'lasts as long as a present love,'—or as 'the painted silks and cottons of the season.'"

It was about this time that his ingenious friend, Mr. Smith, who had distinguished himself in the Irish House of Commons by a speech in favour of Roman Catholic emancipation in the spirit of the advice of his great correspondent, printed and sent it to him. There is something at once very affecting and eloquent in the first paragraph of the reply of Burke; it alludes of course to the loss of his son.—"I could not without ingratitude defer my acknowledgments of your letter, which breathes the very spirit of sympathy and condolence. Others have offered me comfort, but not of a kind that I could accept. You alone have touched the chord to which my feelings vibrate; and touched it the more soothingly because you have touched it sadly.—Yes;—the life which has been so embittered cannot long endure.—The grave will soon close over me and my dejections.—But I will not make so ill a return for your kindness as to overcast your young mind with the gloom that covers mine."

Considerable distress having arisen from the dearness of provisions and many remedial schemes being in consequence proposed for the adoption of government, he collected and addressed to Mr. Pitt in November of this year, "*Thoughts and Details on Scarcity*." In this tract are expounded, in an intelligible manner, some of the doctrines of political economists bearing upon agriculture as a trade. He adverts likewise to the absurdity of some of the schemes proposed to be carried into effect, such as settling a maximum of prices, regulating the wages of labour between farmer and servant by authority, and establishing public granaries in towns by government in order to supply the wants of the people at fixed prices. "The cry of the people in cities and towns,

though unfortunately, from a fear of their multitude and combination, the most regarded, ought in fact to be the least attended to on this subject; for citizens are in a state of utter ignorance of the means by which they are to be fed, and they contribute little or nothing, except in an infinitely circuitous manner to their own maintenance. They are "*Fruges consumere nati*." They are to be heard with great respect and attention upon matters within their province, that is, on trades and manufactures; but on any thing that relates to agriculture, they are to be listened to with the same reverence which we pay to the dogmas of other ignorant and presumptuous men. If any one were to tell them, that they were to give in an account of all the stock in their shops; that attempts would be made to limit their profits, or raise the price of the labouring manufacturers upon them; or recommend to government, out of a capital from the public revenues, to set up a shop of the same commodities in order to rival them and keep them to reasonable dealing, they would very soon see the impudence, injustice, and oppression of such a course. They would not be mistaken; but they are of opinion that agriculture is to be subject to other laws, and to be governed by other principles."

Few things it has been often remarked, escaped the comprehensive range of his observation; nothing indeed which more particularly concerned the well-being, the necessities, the business, or the desires of men generally, or those more immediately around him. One of those introduced into this work, was the use of ardent spirits by the poor, of which he speaks as a statesman, moralist, and *physician* in preventing disease by assimilating bad food to the nourishment of the body, with more good sense than is commonly displayed on that topic.—"As to what is said in a physical and moral view against the home consumption of spirits, experience has long since taught me very little to respect the declamations on that subject—Whether the thunder of the laws, or the thunder of eloquence 'be hurled on gin,' always I am thunder-proof. The alembic, in my mind, has furnished the world a far greater benefit and blessing, than if the *opus maximum* had been really found by chemistry, and like *Midas*, we could turn every thing into gold." His knowledge of farming, and of stock live and dead, was so highly estimated by his neighbours as to occasion frequent applica-

tions for advice upon such matters. He surprised a distinguished literary and political character who about this time paid him a visit, by entering into a history of rural affairs, of the rents, taxes, and variations in the poor's rates of fifty parishes in the county during several consecutive years; as well as the improvements adopted by the neighbourhood in tillage and grazing—all with the fulness of a farmer who had little else to attend to, though it might be supposed that the contentions attendant on public life, had left little time for retaining such details.

The "Thoughts on Scarcity" he had at one time determined to enlarge by the introduction of many additional facts, furnished by his own observation; and to re-model and publish them under the title of "Letters on Rural Economics, addressed to Mr. Arthur Young." The work was even advertised, but the more urgent claims of politics caused it to be first deferred and finally relinquished. Few could have given to such subjects a more popular form, or perhaps more real knowledge, as the letters some years before to his cousin Mr. Garret Nagle, which relate chiefly to rural matters, had displayed. In the beginning of this summer also he had, from the appearance of the young wheat, predicted an insufficient harvest; but finding little credence given to his prognostics in the country, he carried a large quantity of green ears in his carriage to exhibit to agricultural friends in town who proved nearly as incredulous, until the result fully evinced his penetration. Harvest home was always celebrated at Butler's Court with abundant hospitality, the family mingling in the gaiety and sports of the time without reserve, and vying in attention to their humbler guests.

On the question of the circulating medium as an important branch of political economy, he seems early to have entertained opinions, which are now considered the most sound and stable. In a debate (Feb. 13, 1826) on Country Banks, and the general pecuniary distress experienced throughout the country, they were thus adverted to by Mr. Canning. "There was no period of our history at which there was greater distress or greater difficulty and dismay than in 1795. At that period there was published by Mr. Burke, a gentleman of no ordinary or doubtful authority, a book, every point and sentence of which was questioned

at the time, but the truth of which was subsequently most fully established. Mr. Burke, in describing the French revolutionary proceedings, pointed out the mistakes into which they fell with respect to our paper currency, and observed that they seemed to imagine 'that the prosperity of Great Britain grew out of her paper currency, whereas, in point of fact, the paper currency grew out of her prosperity.' * * "It had been his (Mr. Canning's) fortune to hear and to know Mr. Burke—a man, whose eloquence and whose soundness of opinions distinguished him as a member of that House. Unfortunately, however, he had only known him but two years before his death; he received a letter from him when confined at Bath to a sick bed, from which he never arose, on the subject of the stoppage of cash payments by the Bank, in which the concluding sentence was to the following effect:—"Tell Pitt, that if he circulates one pound notes at the same time with guineas, he will never see the guineas again." This was the observation of that great man, who in giving utterance to this sentiment, seemed to exercise a spirit of prophecy which had so very recently been verified."

Several plans for bettering the condition of the poor in the neighbourhood originated at his suggestion. Among these, as likely to promote that spirit of honest independence which forms a kind of pledge for the existence of other good qualities, he recommended institutions for mutual support in cases of age and infirmity in the nature of benefit societies, which were then and are still, much less common among the rural population than in towns. Of one of these he became a patron and a member, subscribed to it as a poor man would do, attended its meetings, visited those who claimed relief, and usually took the opportunity of inculcating sentiments of piety, loyalty, order, and industry among its members. Seventy of the brethren of this society clad in mourning, attended him to the grave. "In 1795 and 1796," writes a gentleman of the neighbourhood (Mr. Gomme) to the author of this work, "corn became much increased in price, and the poor felt the pressure severely. Mr. Burke, who was ever feelingly alive to their wants, and never backward in exerting himself to afford relief, had a windmill in the park at Butler's Court, in which he directed good corn to be ground, made it into bread at his

own house, and retailed it to the poor at a very reduced price. This he said was a better plan than merely to make them a present of it. The bread was of course unadulterated and excellent. He had it served at his own table. I partook of it there; and he requested me to take a loaf to Wycombe in order to show to the more opulent people of that town and vicinity, how much might be done, and with comparatively little trouble, for the benefit of the lower order of the community."

With the poor in this neighbourhood he was generally a favourite, having the address to converse much with them, visit their cottages, overlook or regulate their pastimes as well as their labours, without losing any thing of his dignity. Strolling out at a late period of life during the breakfast hour of his people, he found in a corner of one of the fields a lad, the son of one of his superintending men named Rolf, at his morning's repast, composed of a kind of hodge-podge common in the county. Mr. Burke tasted and commended it. The boy with some pride of heart replied, that it was not so good as he usually had, but if he would come and taste it at dinner, and see how well his mother made it when "father was there," he would say it was much better. "Well then, my boy, go home and tell your mother that I mean to dine with *you* to day off this favourite dish, at the usual hour." The boy delivered the message, to the no small surprise of his mother, who however not doubting its correctness, exerted her very best house-wifery upon the occasion; and accordingly "the Master" made his appearance at the appointed time, partook heartily of their humble fare, and expressed himself sufficiently gratified with his *visit*.

He was frequently accustomed upon public occasions, and upon the occurrence of any event gratifying to his private feelings, to treat the labourers and people about him with a cask of strong beer, his directions about which were, when the news was particularly joyous, *to tap it at both ends*. Some time before the death of his son, intelligence was brought to the house and communicated to the father in a hasty manner, that he had met with some serious accident which endangered his life. The distress which this occasioned may be conceived, until a friend arrived soon afterwards with the pleasing information that he had sustained no bodily harm. "Call up Webster,"

cried Mr. Burke in a moment, "tell him to get all the assistance he can to turn the largest moveable cask of strong beer out of the cellar—bring hither the people to partake of it—and be sure to tap it at both ends with the largest gimblet in the house." It may be doubted whether his antipathy to revolutionary France at this moment did not extend in part to its produce, as the following anecdote communicated by a gentleman to whom I am indebted for several others, would seem to testify.—"Calling at Butler's Court one day in the year 1795, after passing through a drenching shower of rain, Mr. Burke pressed me to take a glass of strong sherry, which he said was of his own importation, and the very best he could procure. "I cannot," he added, "offer you brandy, for I will never pay a guinea per gallon for that or for any other article from that country."

"I cannot conceive," writes the same gentleman, "why Mr. Burke should have been suspected of being a Roman Catholic, when there was nothing whatever to countenance such an assertion, except his having some relations of that persuasion, which is a common thing in Ireland, arising from intermarriages; and his advocating their cause in Parliament, and in the press. This stupid prejudice was not, however, confined to the lower class of people, for I once heard a person holding a considerable office under government term him 'a kiln-dried Roman Catholic.' Shortly after this, it so happened that I was invited to dine at Butler's Court. 'You will meet,' said Mr. Burke to me, 'the Bishop of St. Pol de Leon of the Roman Catholic church, and Dr. Walker King, a dignified clergyman of our *more fortunate and purer church*.' The latter part of the sentence was pronounced emphatically, in allusion perhaps to the then unhappy state of the French church and clergy, and the words made a strong impression upon me, as contradicting so strongly the ungenerous imputation I had lately heard. At table accordingly, I met with the reverend persons he had mentioned, along with several others of the right honourable gentleman's friends. I shall never forget the manner in which he descended the grand flight of stone steps to receive me—the cordial pressure of his hand—and the graceful and dignified demeanour of introducing me to his other guests.

"Burke had a way of doing these little things which

struck me as being particularly his own, and calculated to make a strong impression on the mind of a stranger. He was particularly attentive in his own house, or at his own table, to any man who was of inferior rank; he would frequently address his conversation to such person in order to overcome any diffidence he might feel, and, as the phrase is, *draw him out* to exhibit any peculiar merit or talent he possessed. His own conversation, in his gayer moments, was various and excursive; he did not dwell long on common matters, but giving you some bright and brilliant thoughts or happy phrases which it seemed difficult to forget, would pass on to some kindred or relative topic, and throw out the coruscations of his wit or imagination upon that also, thus keeping up a kind of intellectual sharp-shooting on every subject that offered. It will be supposed there was some effort in this, and it is not improbable; but it was not obvious. His mind, however, seemed to be mostly on the stretch, and few things escaped it. I think it was impossible ever to mistake him for an every-day man; for if in his efforts to sustain his reputation for superiority in private society, he sometimes failed in his hits, and stumbled into or below mediocrity, he recovered in a moment his dignity and proper station."

An attack upon the grant of his pension took place about this time in the House of Lords by the Duke of Bedford, and the Earl of Lauderdale; answered by an animated defence from Lord Grenville there, and from Mr. Windham in the Commons. Some surprise was expressed that men of such consideration in the country, making every allowance for party feelings, should display so much illiberality toward the defender, perhaps the saviour of that very rank and property which served to elevate them above the mass of their fellow-subjects; and from an atom of which, notwithstanding the countenance given to the new opinions, they would have been extremely loth to part. It seemed ungenerous that this should be done by former associates in political life; by men who had acquiesced in grants to other though much less distinguished public men for public services; and who from their position in the state, might be supposed to rate at its proper value a long and laborious career; and to estimate those still more intense though unseen and unrewarded labours which form the toilsome preparative to public eminence.

The reply to these assailants was the celebrated "*Letter to a Noble Lord*," perhaps the most brilliant exhibition of sarcastic powers in the whole range of English prose. On first meeting with this piece, the present writer read it over twice, (many parts half a dozen times), without intermission, affected with no ordinary wonder at the mingled irony, indignant remonstrance, pointed rebuke, and imagery in those bold and extraordinary figures which not merely impress the mind of the reader at the moment by their force, but are seldom afterwards forgotten. The striking passages are nearly as numerous as the sentences—forming an assemblage of what may be termed the flashes of indignant genius roused by a sense of illiberality to throw out its consuming fires on the heads of the aggressors;—"I perceive in it," says the author of '*The Pursuits of Literature*,' "genius, ability, dignity, imagination, and sights more than youthful poets when they dreamed, and sometimes, the philosophy of Plato and the wit of Lucian." The pathetic lamentation for the loss of his son, and the glowing tribute to the memory of an old friend,—in whose heart he says, he had a place till the last beat,—Lord Keppel, uncle to the Duke of Bedford, show a different, though not less striking style of powers. It has been objected, that the introduction of these topics, as they have little to do with the main question, is irrelevant; but in fact they evince much rhetorical skill, by tending to throw odium on the ungenerous spirit shown in attacking a retired public servant, old, infirm, and desponding on account of the loss of that son who would necessarily have stood forth his defender; and of the ingratitude of at least one of his assailants towards the bosom friend and counsellor of his uncle, and the defender of his honour, as he expressly tells us, "in his rudest trials."

The jealousies which he had to encounter during a long and stormy public career, and the few efforts made to win over the influential for personal purposes, are very truly and forcibly adverted to in the following passage. "I possessed not one of the qualities, nor cultivated one of the arts that recommend men to the favour and protection of the great. I was not made for a minion or a tool. As little did I follow the trade of winning the hearts by imposing on the understandings of the people. At every step in my progress in life (for in every step was I traversed and opposed), and at

every turnpike I met, I was obliged to show my passport, and again and again to prove my sole title to the honour of being useful to my country by a proof that I was not wholly unacquainted with its laws and the whole system of its interests both abroad and at home. Otherwise no rank, no toleration even for me. I had no arts but manly arts. On them I have stood, and, please God, in spite of the Duke of Bedford, and the Earl of Lauderdale, to the last gasp will I stand."

At the Duke, he particularly points reprehension. His Grace's little experience in public business, his partiality to the party whose tenets were supposed to sap or to threaten the foundations of all rank and property, the enormous grants of the crown to *his* family in former days, and his youth, were openings to an effective assault from any writer, but to an intellectual gladiator like Burke, offered overpowering advantages. To contend with such a man, armed with every weapon of argument at command, indicated more courage than discretion, for none of his ablest opponents ever escaped without bearing traces of some grievous infliction. Like the electrical fish, a touch in hostility shook the assailant to his centre. "I decline," said the indignant veteran, "his Grace's jurisdiction as a judge. I challenge the Duke of Bedford as a juror to pass upon the value of my services. I cannot recognize in his few and idle years, the competence to judge of my long and laborious life." Not content with overthrowing the politician, he aims a more deadly blow at his possessions, in alluding to the mode by which they were said to be acquired. One of the figures used is equally singular and powerful.—"The grants to the house of Russell (by Henry VIII.) were so enormous as not only to outrage economy but even to stagger credibility. The Duke of Bedford is the leviathan among all the creatures of the crown. He tumbles about his unwieldy bulk; he plays and frolics in the ocean of the royal bounty. Huge as he is, and whilst 'he lies floating many a rood,' he is still a creature. His ribs, his fins, his whalebone, his blubber, the very spiracles through which he spouts a torrent of brine against his origin and covers me all over with the spray—every thing of him, and about him, is from the crown. Is it for him to question the dispensation of the royal favour?"

The express purpose of the pamphlet being to justify the bounty of the crown towards himself, it became necessary to advert to his claims and services, which he does by running a parallel between them and those of the Duke's ancestor, who had profited so largely and by the same bounty. If the retrospect be invidious, it must likewise be admitted there was no inconsiderable provocation. "I have supported with very great zeal, and I am told with some degree of success, those opinions, or if his Grace likes another expression better, those old prejudices which buoy up the ponderous mass of his nobility, wealth, and titles. I have omitted no exertion to prevent him and them from sinking to that level, to which the meretricious French faction his Grace at least coquets with, omit no exertion to reduce both. I have done all I could to discountenance their inquiries into the fortunes of those who hold large portions of wealth without any apparent merit of their own. I have strained every nerve to keep the Duke of Bedford in that situation which alone makes him my superior. Why will his Grace, by attacking me, force me reluctantly to compare my little merit with that which obtained from the crown those prodigies of profuse donations by which he tramples on the mediocrity of humble and laborious individuals? Is it not a singular phenomenon, that whilst the sans-culottes carcase butchers, and the philosophers of the stambles, are pricking their dotted lines upon his (the Duke's) hide, and like the print of the poor ox that we see at the shop windows at Charing Cross, alive as he is and thinking no harm in the world, he is divided into rumps, and sirloins, and briskets, and into all sorts of pieces for roasting, boiling, and stewing—that all the time they are measuring *him*, his Grace is measuring *me*; is invidiously comparing the bounty of the crown with the deserts of the defender of his order, and in the same moment fawning on those who have the knife half out of the sheath—poor innocent,

"Pleas'd to the last he crops the flowery food,
And licks the hand just rais'd to shed his blood."—

Report asserts that the account given in this work of the origin of the Russell possessions is erroneous; while others have said that the information came from the library of George III. at Buckingham House. No formal contradiction

of the statement was made, and Burke is not likely to have risked conjecture where confutation was so easy. On his part it was perhaps rather a violent yet scarcely unfair retaliation. Against an invading and wanton enemy, all arms are likely to be used; and he must be a poor soldier who chooses the weaker in preference to the stronger weapon. The regret may be that he wielded his advantage rather imprudently than unjustly, by furnishing hints to the Agrarians or Jacobins of a future day who may be inclined to make experiments in parcelling out those extensive and flourishing domains which he calls the "low, fat Bedford level." His other assailant on this occasion, the Earl of Lauderdale, lived to recant his admiration of Revolutionary France and a few other popular fallacies of the day; and no doubt to regret any illiberality toward an old associate whom he had on former occasions handsomely complimented.*

During the greater part of 1795, he kept up an active correspondence with Dr. Hussey, a Roman Catholic priest, afterwards President of Maynooth, and titular Bishop of Waterford, formerly employed on missions to Spain and Italy, and who was then in Ireland busily promoting the claims of his co-religionists to equality of civil rights. These communications were so especially confidential that he more than once doubts the security of the post office. He touches, as may be supposed, on several delicate points,—and, to an intimation by his correspondent that Roman Catholic bishops may be elected by the clergy, and one out of three so elected to be chosen by government,—he replies, with more zeal than discretion, that Protestants should not be permitted to interfere at all with their bishops. Thus may have originated that refusal of the Veto, which if conceded, might have kept from the exercise of spiritual authority, some of the ecclesiastical fire-brands who have since tended to mar the peace and industry of their country. He even objects

* From many effusions of his Lordship to Mr. Burke, the following handsome one, applied to his Reform Bill in 1781, is selected—"He (Mr. Burke,) was the only man in the country whose powers were equal to the forming and accomplishing so systematic and able a plan of reform; not a mean, narrow, wretched scheme of retrenchment, breaking in upon the dignity of the crown and the honour of the nation, but a great and beautiful arrangement of office, calculated not to degrade a government, but to exalt and to adorn it."

to the Lord Chancellor or Judges being Trustees for the intended College of Maynooth—as if the authority that furnished the funds should have no voice or influence whatever in their conduct and distribution. In any other cause, he would have seen this anomaly, but a spurious jealousy arising from the generally corrupt nature of official authorities in Ireland, or the fact of having imbibed undue bias in favour of the body to which a beloved son had been agent, and thus tending to carry out the aims of the departed, may have induced him to recommend what unquestionably proves to be no advantage to the quiet or good government of that kingdom. On the other hand, he assails with great power the opinions of angry Romanists, of hoping for relief from the growing body of United Irishmen, or from connections with France. Few educated natives of Ireland, removed from the cabals and local prejudices of the spot to larger and wiser views of the interests of their country, but feel and acknowledge the truth of the following striking appeal from the malignity and ignorance of its violent spirits to the common sense and good feeling of the nation.

“In the name of God,” he writes, “what grievance has Ireland, as Ireland, to complain of with regard to Great Britain?—unless the protection of the most powerful country upon earth—giving all her privileges without exception in common to Ireland, and reserving to herself only the painful pre-eminence of tenfold burthens, be a matter of complaint. The subject, as a subject, is as free in Ireland as in England. As a member of the empire, an Irishman has every privilege of a natural-born Englishman, in every part of it, in every occupation, and in every branch of commerce. No monopoly is established against him anywhere; and the great staple manufacture of Ireland is not only not prohibited, not only not discouraged, but it is privileged in a manner that has no example. The provision trade is the same; nor does Ireland on her part take a single article from England but what she has with more advantage than she could have it from any nation upon earth. I say nothing of the immense advantages she derives from the use of English capital. In what country upon earth is it that a quantity of linens, the moment they are lodged in the warehouse, and before their sale, would entitle the Irish merchant or manufacturer to draw bills on the terms and at the time in which this is done by the ware-

housemen in London? Ireland, therefore, as Ireland, whether it be taken civilly, constitutionally, or commercially, suffers no grievance." He had just before said, "The language of the day (1795) went plainly to the separation of the two kingdoms. God forbid, that anything like it should ever happen! They would both be ruined by it; but Ireland would suffer most and first."

The recall of his friend Earl Fitzwilliam formed another topic of discussion with this gentleman, Grattan, and others; while he comments on one of the Romanist bishops (Mr. Coppinger), whose letter to him bore "the seals with arins, with a mitre. * * * I must confess I wish you would hint, with all the delicacy which belongs to such a subject, that such exterior marks should be forborne as much as possible"—a hint which, if recently followed in England, might have saved that hierarchy from much of the odium it justly incurred.

In the midst of this, as exhibiting the claims of all descriptions made upon his attention, Malone wrote for something in the way of biography of their late friend Reynolds. To this he replies nearly as he had formerly done to Lady Inchiquin, that the more he reflected on the subject the more difficult he found it; that there was little of incident in his life to detail; that having no skill in painting, he could not enter upon his productions as critic; that as a social and agreeable man, he had already said nearly all he could say; but that if he, Malone, would draw up anything of that kind, it should have his best attention, with such additions and suggestions as circumstances required. He laments that his chief business is with the dead, and that excepting a few remnants of animal functions, he is dead himself.

CHAPTER XV.

Establishment of the Emigrant School at Penn—Letters to J. Gahagan, Esq.—Letters on a Regicide Peace—Letters to the Prince of Wurtemberg—His prophetic Spirit as opposed to that of Mr. Pitt—Report concerning him—Letter to Mrs. Leadbeater—Letter on the Affairs of Ireland—His Illness and Death.

IN the earlier part of 1796 he found active occupation in founding a school for the destitute children of emigrants

who had perished by the guillotine or the sword of the revolution. With the view of being under his immediate superintendence, the house of the late General Haviland, at Penn, was selected for that purpose. It was already the property of government, having been leased in 1794 from the person to whom it had been sold by the devisees of the deceased, as a retreat for a few of the superior, but houseless, French clergy—a design which from unexpected obstacles, did not take effect. Being still in charge of the barrack department, it was applied for by the Marquis of Buckingham and others, through the representations of Burke. Mr. Pitt gave his assent, with an annual allowance of £600 per annum. The trustees were, in addition to the Marquis and Mr. Burke, the Duke of Portland, the Lord Chancellor, Mr. Windham, and Dr. Walker King. The Abbé Maraine formed the head of the establishment, aided by the learned and esteemed Abbé Chevallier. A few notes on this subject were exchanged between Mr. Pitt, the Marquis, and Mr. Burke.

An antiquarian correspondent connected with this institution as treasurer after the death of the original founder, having politely communicated to me a few memoranda concerning it, they cannot perhaps be better given than in his own words.

“In April, 1796, the emigrant school was opened and Mr. Burke, for the remainder of his life, watched over the institution with the solicitude, not merely of a friend, but of a father. He visited it frequently, sometimes daily, being about three miles distant from his house, and often supplied the table of masters and scholars from his own. His smiles might be said to have gladdened the hearts of the exiles; I have witnessed many interesting scenes there of that nature; they were doomed, alas, too soon to lose their kind protector. At the annual distribution of prizes, the senior scholar delivered a Latin oration in the presence of a large assembly of nobility and gentry in the great hall, in which Mr. Burke was always alluded to as their parent and friend. He assigned to these youths a blue uniform, wearing in their hats a white cockade; inscribed ‘Vive le Roi;’ those who had lost their fathers had it placed on a bloody label, those who had lost uncles on a black one. The Marquis of Buckingham made them a present of a small

brass cannon, and a pair of colours, which were displayed on public days, as a source of youthful pride by those descendants of suffering loyalty. "After the death of Mr. Burke, I was appointed treasurer, and received from the Lords of the Treasury fifty pounds per month for the support of the establishment. Upon the restoration of legitimate monarchy in France in 1814, the money was remitted thence, until the dissolution of the institution, on the 1st of August 1820, when on the departure of the superior and the pupils, the colours were presented to me as a token of remembrance, and I retain them with satisfaction, from the interesting associations they recall. Many of the youths educated in this college, so humanely founded through the influence and under the auspices of Mr. Burke, at present (1825) occupy important stations in various parts of the dominions of the King of France, and for their success in life they ought ever to regard with sentiments of gratitude and veneration the memory of that great and good man."*

* He thus describes the house :—"Penn, in Buckinghamshire, to which Mr. Burke frequently resorted as the friend of General Haviland, and latterly as patron of the emigrant school, lies about three miles north-west of Beaconsfield. Many of the residents are distinguished for patriarchal longevity; not a few attaining a century of years. The family of Grove trace an uninterrupted descent from the Conquest as proprietors of the same estate. The last possessor, Mr. Edmund Grove, died in June 1823, at the advanced age of ninety-four; and being well-known in this part of the country as a fair representative of the ancient English yeoman, may be worth noticing. When young, he had been the play-fellow of the late Viscount Curzon and of John Baker Holroyd who died Earl of Sheffield, and was known to most of the surrounding nobility and gentry by the name of Yeoman Grove—a name now disused for the appellation of Esquire, but formerly applied to those who farmed their own estates. Yeoman Grove was likewise known to George III. who permitted him an unusual freedom. Whenever they met in the street at Windsor, which was not unfrequent on market-days, he would grasp the royal hand with fervour, and in a way peculiarly his own, inquire, 'How does your Majesty do?—How is the Queen?—How are all the children?' which commonly occasioned the Royal Personage a hearty good-humoured laugh.

"Tyler's Green House, the Residence of General Haviland, was formerly the property and residence of the Bakers, ancestors of the Earl of Sheffield, of Sheffield Place, county of Sussex. It is now no more; 'nought could relieve the tottering mansion from its fall.' In 1822 it was sold by auction in lots; of course pulled down and carried away, so that scarcely a vestige now remains to mark the spot where senators were

The superintendence of this school became a source of occupation and amusement, to divert occasional gloom, or as relaxation from heavier labours. The interest which he took in its success and continuance may be judged by the earnest manner in which he bequeaths it in his will to the protection of the noble persons joined in the trust; while the wish is expressed that it may be placed under the immediate care of Dr. Walker King, and Dr. Laurence. These gentlemen as his personal friends and from their greater acquaintance with the details, he thought would take more interest than strangers in securing stability to an institution to which he had given existence.

Instances of his personal kindness and attention towards the members of this establishment and their friends, were shown in a variety of ways, more particularly in presents from his larder of any delicacy which it did not so much lie in their way to procure. This very often occasioned an

went to converse, and wit, whim, and eloquence to flow in no ordinary current amid the social circle formed by the Burkes. Previous to the demolition, I had a correct drawing made of the front, which I have placed among my illustrations of the county of Bucks.

"To those who are acquainted with the country, the guides to the site of the mansion are two of the largest and most lofty fir trees in the kingdom. The General was accustomed to call them his two grenadiers; one was more lofty than the other, an unlucky monkey kept by Mrs. Haviland having ascended to the summit of the other, and cropped the leading branch. These trees may be distinctly seen from the terrace at Windsor—from Harrow-on-the-Hill—from St. Paul's Church—and from the rising ground near Reading: in the woody neighbourhood of Penn they occasionally serve as a guide to bewildered pedestrians. I saved them from the levelling axe in 1798, by my representation of their utility, and I am assured that the present noble proprietor, Richard Earl Howe, will not suffer so grand a feature on his extensive domains in Buckinghamshire to be destroyed.

"However incredible it may appear, it is vouched as fact by persons of respectability in the neighbourhood, that the cannonading at the reduction of Valenciennes in 1793, was distinctly heard by the inhabitants of Penn. This no doubt will be laughed at by many as utterly beyond belief, but there are many authentic instances on record of the distance to which sound occasionally travels, depending no doubt on a peculiar state of the atmosphere at the time; it is understood, beyond question, that the cannonading on that occasion was heard at Dover. During the late war, the firing of cannon when ships were engaged at sea during the night has likewise been distinguished at Penn; the time has been frequently noted, and the fact shortly afterwards ascertained from the public papers."

amusing scene to the friends of the family, between him and his housekeeper, Mrs. Webster. She it seems, had more regard for the credit of her master's table than for the appetites of the emigrants, and whenever there was any thing choice in the larder, such as a haunch of venison or game intended for the second course, she was obliged to keep watch over the dainty, lest it should be despatched by her improvident master to the "French people," and her management in the repast be called in question by his visitors. Sometimes he contrived to elude her vigilance; on other occasions was caught and disappointed. In attempting one day to send off a present of venison intended to be dressed for company, the wary housekeeper who was upon the alert darted upon him as on a thief caught in the fact—"Sir, Sir," she cried out, fastening upon the article in question, "I cannot part with my haunch,—I cannot indeed—I shall be ruined if I lose my haunch—we shall have nothing else fit to dress for dinner." "But my dear Mrs. Webster, pray consider these poor people—" "I can consider nothing, Sir, but that we shall have no principal dish—give it away to French people indeed!" "But these unfortunate people have been accustomed to such things in their own country, and for one day I think we can do without them." "Bless me, Sir, remember there are Lord and Lady —— and Mr. and Mrs. —— coming to dinner, and without something of this kind I shall get into shocking disgrace.—No, no, Sir, I cannot part with my haunch;" and adhering rigidly to this determination, her master was at length obliged to retreat, foiled in his object.

The Abbé Maraine, superior of the school, who was a good-natured man and had little idea of English school discipline, had been complaining of the indocility of some of the pupils, when Mr. Burke replied he must exert his cane with more vigour, and if that would not do, he must flog—and flog soundly. The Abbé appeared somewhat shocked at the punishment. "Do not fear its success," replied Mr. Burke, "it is our chief receipt in England for turning out eminent men—it seldom fails—good scholars, nay good poets are made by the rod—and why not good soldiers?" The superior ultimately adopted the recipe, and after a time confessed (in his own words):

"that he believed Monsieur Burke was as right in that point as he had been in so many others."

He now lived in great seclusion; rarely saw any of the Ministry save Mr. Windham; and gives in a letter to Mr. Gahagan, father of the Baroness Montesquieu, June 22, 1796, a distressing picture of incurable grief—

"You have been very good and charitable in wishing to visit this infirmary, where my wife, my poor old friend Will Burke, and myself, are all lame; Mrs. Burke with the very same lameness which took her some years ago, without effect, to Margate, where we had the pleasure of seeing you. The sight of such a sympathising friend is a comfort to those who are no longer in society. Since my calamity* I have not dined out of my own house; nor am I fond of receiving any new acquaintance; my business and my pleasure in this life being both of them completely over. When I mentioned Mons. de Montesquieu, it was not as a man I wished to see, on account of his own distinguished merit, or the fame of his family, which the world is so full of, and to whose labours the world owes so much; it is as part of an old friend that I who refuse all new acquaintance took the liberty of desiring him to accompany you. Our house has very little lodging-room, and it is all we could do to lodge you two. Our settled family takes up four beds, and my old friend Dr. Walker King whom I have not seen for a good while and whom I am not likely to see for this year again, we expect here with his wife and child. We have not a bed for a third person; so that I must deny myself for the present (and it is a real self-denial) the society of the worthy and most respectable gentleman you proposed to accompany yourself and your son the Baron.

"Alas! my dear friend, I am not what I was two years ago. Society is too much for my nerves. I sleep ill at night; and am drowsy and sleep much in the day. Every exertion of spirits which I make for the society I cannot refuse, costs me much, and leaves me doubly heavy and dejected after it. Such is the person you come to see; or rather the wreck of what was never a very first rated vessel. Such as I am, I feel infinitely for the kindness of those old friends who remember me with compassion. As to

* The death of his son.

new, I never see one but such French as come to visit the school, which supplies to me the void in my own family, and it is my only comfort. For the sake of that I still submit to see some who are still more miserable than I am. Adieu, my dear Sir, until Monday. Mrs. Burke and my niece salute you cordially."

Under such a degree of despondency, ordinary minds would have broken down. Not so his. And it gives us a strong impression of original and yet untamed vigour, to find him detaching his thoughts from melancholy retrospects, and through the medium of the pen, deemed now an almost irresistible weapon, devoting them to the patriotic design of dissipating a gathering gloom over the public mind nearly as heavy as that which overshadowed his own.

The misfortunes of the war and triumphant career of the republican arms, unchecked by any reverse on the continent of Europe, had occasioned a momentary revulsion of public feeling not uncommon in England. From warm anticipations of success, fears still stronger began to be entertained of the final result of the struggle. Several friends of the ministry, if not some of its members, were among the victims of these fears. Lord Auckland's pamphlet became a kind of ground-work to the superstructure of apprehensions raised by this timid order of politicians, added to those who had from the first opposed the contest with France. A cry for peace was therefore pretty generally diffused. Mr. Pitt, either really affected by it or willing to chime in with the humour of the day, acquiesced by opening negotiations through two or three different channels, with the agents of the Republic, who received our advances with something of insolence. Indignation however was not immediately roused. We sustained a rebuff or two patiently. In this situation, Mr. Burke feeling for the national dignity, and determined to persuade or to shame the desponding out of their fears, produced towards the end of the summer in two letters addressed to a member of the House of Commons the work noticed in a previous page, "*Thoughts on a Regicide Peace.*"

This is another of those marvellous productions which combining strong powers of argument with great eloquence and rhetorical skill, are conveyed with little or no ornament

to the understanding. Among the replies, for there were few attempts at an *answer*, the best perhaps is in one of the critical journals of the day,* On the question at issue, the writers were utterly at variance. But as genius can seldom be insensible to genius however opposite their political speculations, the reviewer characterizes the work of his great opponent in the following terms:—

“Such is the outline of this publication; of which if it be considered merely as a work of literature it might be sufficient to say, that it is scarcely surpassed in excellence by any of the happiest productions of the best days of its author. The same vast reach and comprehension of view—the same unbounded variety of allusion, illustration, and ornament drawn from every province of nature and science—the same unrivalled mastery over language—the same versatility of imagination which at will transforms itself from sublime and terrific genius into gay and playful fancy—the same happy power of relieving the harshness of political dispute by beautiful effusions of sentiment, and of dignifying composition by grave and lofty maxims of moral and civil wisdom—the same inexhaustible ingenuity in presenting even common ideas under new and fascinating shapes—the same unlimited sway over the human passions which fills us at his pleasure with indignation, with horror, or with pity; which equally commands our laughter or our tears; in a word, the same wit, humour, pathos, invention, force, dignity, copiousness, and magnificence, are conspicuous in this production, which will immortalize the other writings of Mr. Burke. There is nothing ordinary in his view of a subject. He is perhaps of all writers the one of whom it may be said with the most strict truth, that no idea appears hackneyed in his hands; no topic seems common-place when he treats it. When the subject must (from the very narrowness of human conception, which bounds even the genius of Mr. Burke) be borrowed, the turn of thought and the manner of presenting it are his own. The attitude and drapery are peculiar to the master.”

Two or three others of his most able yet determined opponents (and the fact is mentioned because hostile testimony on such an occasion will be least suspected of exaggeration)

* Monthly Review; written by Mr., afterwards Sir James, Mackintosh.

look upon this work as his greatest effort in politics—certainly the greatest on the French Revolution, in the strong, full, yet clear train of argument he pursues, the precision of view and unity of purpose displayed in the plan, and the sobriety with which they are submitted to the serious consideration of the nation. As the letter to a noble lord might be considered a kind of field-day to the light troops of his imagination, sarcasm, and humour, so the “Regicide Peace” may be considered the heavy artillery—the breaching battery of his judgment and reasoning powers. Besides, it is a kind of dying legacy to his country. It was the last thing he lived to publish; and is believed to have had much effect in re-animating the drooping courage or querulous spirit of the timid. “To a people who have been once proud and great, and great because they were proud,” he observes in his first page, “a change in the national spirit is the most terrible of all revolutions.”

A profound remark in a few words appears to demolish a favourite popular notion,—that kingdoms resemble men in having their periods of youth, maturity, and decay. “I am not quite of the mind of those speculators who seem assured that necessarily, and by the constitution of things, all states have the same periods of infancy, manhood, and decrepitude, that are found in the individuals that compose them. Parallels of this sort rather furnish similitudes to illustrate or to adorn, than supply analogies from whence to reason. The objects which are attempted to be forced into an analogy are not found in the same classes of existence. Individuals are physical beings, subject to laws universal and invariable. The immediate cause acting in these laws may be obscure; the general results are subjects of certain calculation. But commonwealths are not physical but moral essences. They are artificial combinations, and in their proximate efficient cause, the arbitrary productions of the human mind. We are not yet acquainted with the laws which necessarily influence the stability of that kind of work made by that kind of agent.”

Touching on this subject in the letter to Mr. W. Elliot, he says—“I am not of opinion that the race of men and the commonwealths they create, like the bodies of individuals, grow effete, and languid, and bloodless, and ossify by the necessities of their own conformation, and the fatal operation

of longevity and time. These analogies between bodies natural and politic, though they may sometimes illustrate arguments, furnish no arguments of themselves. They are but too often used under colour of a specious philosophy, to find apologies for the despair of laziness and pusillanimity, and to excuse the want of all manly efforts, when the exigencies of our country call for them more loudly."

The first letter relates generally to the overtures for peace, in which some incidental and relative matters are discussed. The second enters into an examination of the genius and character of the French Revolution as it regards other nations, and an opinion is hazarded supported by some facts, that the aggrandizement of the nation at the expense of part, or of the whole of the rest of Europe in a more direct and violent way than is the common policy of states, formed an inducement with some of her statesmen to countenance the first excesses of the people. A third letter—treating on the rupture of the negociations, the terms of peace proposed, and the resources of the country for the continuance of the war, was in progress through the press when death snatched the writer from the scene of his labours. A fourth letter, which it has been observed was written but not completed, pursues the subject through its various relations, chiefly in the form of comment on that of Lord Auckland; to the doctrines of which it gives a complete overthrow.

In conversation, his opinions were quite as decided and not less forcibly expressed. When the negociations at Lisle, which he thought derogatory to the country were going on, and by some were thought to promise peace, he said from the first that such a result was impossible—"He was only astonished how the people of England, or such a body of men as the English Ministry, could for a moment believe that the republican leaders would grant peace, even were peace desirable, without first requiring the surrender of our national honour. They are doubly foes," he added; "for they would not only injure but insult you." To a gentleman who began to talk to him on the probable success of the negotiation then pending, and consequent termination of the revolution. "The termination of the revolution! to be sure!" exclaimed Mr. Burke, with his usual force, felicity, and truth. "The revolution over! Why sir, it is scarcely begun! As yet you have only heard the first music; you'll

see the actors presently; but neither you nor I shall see the close of the drama." Mr. Fox is said more than once to have expressed his astonishment at the singular fulfilment of his predictions. When a nobleman of some political celebrity, in allusion to the vehemence of Burke on the question of revolutionary politics, hinted an opinion that he was a splendid madman—"Whether mad or inspired," is reported to have been the answer, "fate seems to have determined that he shall be an uncommon political prophet."

These letters are well worthy of being referred to by those who wish to have a thorough knowledge of the times, and his views of the injudicious conduct of ministry. They furnish the best idea, if not of the origin, at least of the deadly nature of the war in which the country was engaged; of the impossibility of concluding peace upon any terms consistent with the national honour and security; and they prove what will perhaps not now be disputed, that peace at the moment would have been more dangerous than the hostility in which we were compelled to persevere. The character drawn of what he calls "the Cannibal Republic," in different parts of the letters is indeed an extraordinary effort, for any thing equal to which in completeness and force, the reader will in vain look in any historical detail, ancient or modern. The exposure is as complete as if every individual member of the fearful machine was directly under his eye—the finished piece of dissection of a wonderful political anatomist, who not merely traces the broad outline, the external figure and features of his *subject*, but whose knife penetrates to the heart, and whose saw bares even the *sensorium* of this great moral monster, displaying the whole of its secret motives, principles and workings to the view of the world; the causes of its inflammatory temperament, and morbid yet fearful vigour.

Nothing is more remarkable than the prophetic truths which they contain. Futurity may be said to have been open to his view. He wrote under a strong impression that his death was not far distant. "I shall not live to behold," he says in his first page, "the unravelling of the intricate plot which saddens and perplexes the awful drama of Providence now acting on the moral theatre of the world. Whether for thought or for action I am at the end of my career." At the conclusion of the first letter he again adds—"What I say, I *must* say at once.

Whatever I write is in its nature testamentary. It may have the weakness, but it has the sincerity of a dying declaration." When peace was eagerly sought, and as eagerly anticipated perhaps because it was sought, he calmly tells the country, "We are not at the end of our struggle, nor near it. Let us not deceive ourselves; we are at the *beginning* of great troubles." Speaking of the lukewarmness of the friends of Ministry against the regicides as a body, we are told, "much less were they made to infuse into our minds that stubborn persevering spirit which alone is capable of bearing up against those vicissitudes of fortune which will probably occur, and those burdens which must be inevitably borne in a long war. I speak it emphatically, and with a desire that it should be marked, *in a long war.*" A little further on, he hints at a period of twenty years or more;—with what surprising accuracy on all these points, need not here be repeated.

Alluding in another part to the partition of Poland which he had never ceased to reprobate, are the following remarkable words — "*Hereafter the world will have cause to rue this iniquitous measure, and they most who were most concerned in it.*" Who on reading this, will not immediately bring to remembrance the calamities and degradations sustained for so many years afterwards by Austria, Prussia, and Russia, and more particularly the former two, the actors in that spoliation,—under the iron gripe of Buonaparte? Will not these be immediately acknowledged as the unerring marks of retributive justice? Is it quite clear, notwithstanding the present calm, that the measure of retribution is full? Against the spoliation of the territory of France also, as of that of Poland,* Mr. Burke laboured hard to teach the Allies

* It seems to have escaped general notice, that the misfortunes of Poland in her final partition, may be in some degree attributed, however undesignedly, to Mr. Fox and the Opposition, in the strong and unusual means made use of to thwart Mr. Pitt in the business of Oczakow. They lay claim, it is true, to the merit of having prevented war on that occasion. But if war had then taken place with England for one act of violence, Russia, in all probability, would not have ventured upon other and still greater aggressions. Nothing after all, might have saved Poland from the combination then on foot against her; but it is certain that Mr. Pitt found little encouragement to make the attempt. What the present (1854) armed array of Europe may do, remains in the womb of time; but Russia may be taught to rue her career of aggrandizement, and on several occasions, of injustice. The question asked in the text thirty years ago, may still be repeated, "Is it certain that her measure of retribution is full?"

the impolicy in 1792 and 1793, but he laboured in vain ; and the consequences were that condign punishment for the attempt in war and suffering which he anticipates for them throughout these letters. They may be considered indeed that great man's political will. The fulfilment of so many predictions is one of the most curious circumstances in modern history. At all times it is true, dying words have been considered impressive things. If men are ever for a moment permitted by the Almighty to have the slightest degree of foreknowledge, it is probably near to the termination of life, when the mind abstracted from its tottering tenement and in some degree purified from temporal interests and passions, forms the most correct and unprejudiced estimate of surrounding circumstances,—not merely of what is, but of what is to come. The sentiments of ordinary men at such times are worth serious consideration. But those of a wise and pre-eminent person such as in the instance before us, distinguished through life for the possession of much penetration and knowledge, claim no inconsiderable portion of our reverence and regard.

Though a decided advocate for war as the less evil to the country, he condemned almost uniformly, after the first few months, not only some part of the ministerial principle, but almost the whole of the plan on which it was conducted. That it was most unfortunate is true. This would seem to corroborate Burke's judgment on the matter; yet does not decide the question against those who took the most active part in directing general measures. There were differences however, in his and in Mr. Pitt's views, which seem also to tell in favour of the superior sagacity of the former ; and as they bore on what have since proved some of the leading points of the contest, may be worth enumerating. Mr. Burke declared from the first that there would be war, and that it would be an arduous and a long war. Mr. Pitt on the contrary, not only publicly in the House of Commons but at his own fire-side, at his own table, and in the most unreserved manner to his confidential friends, maintained, first that there would be no war, and then that the war would be short and the superiority on our part not doubtful. Mr. Burke from the moment of the declaration of hostilities, entreated nay almost prayed, the coalesced Powers, that the integrity of the French

territory should be preserved inviolate as necessary not only to their own immediate success, but to the future equilibrium of Europe. Mr. Pitt, from the circumstances attending the surrender of her first towns to the Allies, pretty plainly intimated some intention of permitting her to be dismembered; and this is said to have been the first thing that thoroughly roused her to indignation and the most determined resistance. Mr. Burke wished to have it perfectly understood in France, that the war was levelled at the faction which governed her, not against the nation. Mr. Pitt thought it unnecessary or useless in his public manifestoes to be very precise in drawing distinctions between them. Mr. Burke urged that from the peculiar nature of the contest, France should be attacked only in France, and that frittering away our force against her colonies and even reducing them one after another, neither crippled her in the slightest degree, nor in point of fact advanced one step nearer to subduing her. Mr. Pitt by the sacrifices made to effect those conquests, evidently attributed an importance to them which subsequent events did not warrant; while he crippled our force for efficient service in Europe.

At the conclusion of the struggle we have seen all Burke's opinions verified or followed to the letter. The war proved trying and long beyond precedent. France to be overpowered was obliged to be attacked in France. The allied Sovereigns, who in self-defence had to attack the old root of jacobin aggression which had sprouted afresh in the form of an Emperor, found it necessary to come forward and declare that they made war, not upon her, but upon her ambitious ruler. And with some hundred thousands of armed men, which seemed to place the country at their nod, were obliged explicitly to declare and to guarantee the strict integrity of her territory before they could hope to succeed in their design. "It would answer no great purpose," he says, so early as 1796 with some severity, "to enter into the particular errors of the war. *The whole has been but one error.* It was but nominally a war of alliance. As the combined Powers pursued it, there was nothing to hold an alliance together. There could be no tie of *honour*, in a society for pillage."

Of that description of war policy which led us to expensive and destructive expeditions to the West Indies and other

places, he writes. "A remote, an expensive, a murderous, and, in the end, an unproductive adventure, carried on upon ideas of mercantile knight-errantry, without any of the generous wildness of Quixotism, is considered as sound and solid sense; and a war in a wholesome climate, a war at our door, a war directly on the enemy, a war in the heart of his country, a war in concert with an internal ally and in combination with the external, is regarded as folly and romance."

An incident which occurred about this time is said to have given him as poor an opinion of Mr. Pitt's taste or love of Art as he entertained of the measures of his Cabinet. The Grand Duke of Florence, pressed at the moment for money and in dread of losing his magnificent collection of works of art by the progress of the French in Italy, is reported to have offered to send them to this country as security for a loan of £200,000; to become the permanent property of England should the money not be repaid in ten years. This proposal the Minister declined: finding perhaps that he had already quite as many claimants upon his ways and means as could well be satisfied.

A present of the "Letters on a Regicide Peace," sent to his Serene Highness the Hereditary Prince of Wurtemberg, then in England, was accompanied by the following note: "The author of the Letters which his kinsman will have the honour of laying before the Prince of Wurtemberg, would not have presumed to think them in the smallest degree worthy of being so presented, if the extraordinary condescension of His Serene Highness had not made it his duty to acknowledge his respectful sense of that condescension by such an offering to it as was alone in his power. He would have presented himself personally, according to His Serene Highness's gracious permission, signified to him through his friend Sir John Hippisley, to pay the homage which every one owes to the rank and virtues of the Prince of Wurtemberg, but he did not choose to affect his compassion by exhibiting to His Serene Highness the remains of an object worn out by age, grief, and infirmity, and condemned to perpetual retreat. The author is convinced that the favourable sentiments of the Prince in regard to those letters, are not owing to the talents of the writer, but to the cause which he has undertaken, however weakly,

to defend, and of which His Serene Highness is the protector by situation and by disposition.

"The author hopes that if it should please God, by his all-powerful interposition, to preserve the ruins of the civilized world, His Serene Highness will become a great instrument in its necessary reparation; and that not only in the noble estates which comprise his own patrimony, but in the two great empires in which he has so natural and just an influence, as well as in the third,* which His Serene Highness is going to unite in interest and affection with the other two. In this he will co-operate with the beneficial and enlarged views of the illustrious house and its virtuous chief, who are on the point of having the happiness of his alliance. To the complete success of that alliance, public and domestic, some of the author's latest and most ardent vows will be directed! In the great task allotted to the Sovereigns who shall remain, His Serene Highness will find it necessary to exercise in his own territories, and also to recommend wherever his influence shall reach, a judicious, well-tempered, and manly severity in the support of law, order, religion, and morals; and this will be as expedient for the happiness of the people, as it will be to follow the natural bent of his own good heart, in procuring, by more pleasant modes, the good of the subject, who stands every where in need of a firm and vigorous, full as much as of a lenient and healing government."

The sagacity which had enabled him to penetrate the unhappy results of the French Revolution, and the energy and pertinacity with which he opposed it in speech and in writing, excited among many who had not the same length of view as himself, or indeed any conception whatever of the evils impending, a variety of conjectures as to the cause. At first mere surprise was expressed at the boldness of his predictions. When however he seemed determined to act upon them by the breach which took place with his party for what were then thought simply speculative differences of opinion, they put him down as but a remove from insanity. This idea was afterwards industriously circulated, to which he partly alluded after a vehement sally in the House of Commons by a deliberate address to the chair in the

* Great Britain; in allusion to the projected marriage of the Prince with the Princess Royal of England.

words of St. Paul, "I am not mad, most noble Festus, but speak the words of truth and soberness." To an observation of his niece on the violence and absurd rumours by which he was incessantly assailed, he replied, "Some part of the world, my dear—I mean the Jacobin or unwise part of it—think, or affect to think, that *I* am mad; but believe me the world twenty years hence will and with reason too, think from their conduct that *they* must have been mad." With those who found interest in decrying his public exertions, repetitions of the rumour were heard particularly after the death of the younger Richard when his grief was known to be extreme; and it sometimes had the effect even of imposing upon friends, an instance of which occurred soon after the publication of the "Letter to a Noble Lord."

A report under the guise of seeming secrecy reached them in town, of his being afflicted with such total alienation of mind as to wander about his park during the day, kissing the cows and horses. This circumstance if true, would be perhaps no more than is done by many honest and fond farmers and stable-boys without imputation of a wandering of the wits. Neither was it perhaps with Burke's warm affection towards the dumb as well as speaking members of his establishment great matter for wonder, as he had in fact some favourite cows* which to be more under his own eye were put to graze near the house. A man of rank, however, left London instantly to learn particulars, and was received in the usual manner of an old friend without observing any perceptible change in his host. Not quite satisfied with this tacit contradiction, yet deeming it indecorous to ask direct questions, he adverted in conversation to the public occurrences of the day, and to the probable train of any new studies by his host in relation to them, when the latter unsuspecting of the drift of the visitor, produced some of the most eloquent and ably-argued passages from the Letters on Regicide Peace which he was then writing. Convinced now of the information being erroneous, he hinted to Mrs. Burk the main purport of his journey, when the following affecting incident was detailed, which probably formed the foundation for the

* A pretty piece, by Reinagle, delineating the house and grounds, represents Mr. Burke in front of the mansion putting a favourite cow, and his lady and a female friend walking at a little distance.

story, though it had thriven considerably in magnitude in the journey from Beaconsfield to London.

A feeble old horse, which had been a favourite with the junior Burke, and his constant companion in all rural journeyings and sports when both were alike healthful and vigorous, was now in his age and on the death of his master, turned out to take the run of the park at ease for the remainder of his life with strict injunctions to the servants that he should neither be ridden nor molested. While walking one day in solitary musing, Mr. Burke perceived this worn-out servant come close up to him, and at length after some moments spent in viewing his person, followed by seeming recollection and confidence, deliberately rested its head upon his bosom. The singularity of the action, the remembrance of his dead son, its late master, who occupied much of his thoughts at all times, and the apparent attachment and almost intelligence of the poor brute as if it could sympathize with his inward sorrows, rushing at once into his mind totally overpowered his firmness, and throwing his arms over its neck, he wept long and loudly.

His health, though not intellectual powers, had been for some time in a declining state, which terminated in such debility and loss of muscular energy as to render motion and his usual exercise impracticable. To this state of unexpected if not premature decay, his habits of application, literary pursuits, and former laborious Parliamentary exertions no doubt tended. The stomach very imperfectly and painfully performed its office; and emaciation ensued. How many voluntary labourers for fame are doomed to feel that study is of itself but an avenue to disease—that the most glorious and enduring exercises of mind but prepare the way for the dissolution of its earthly tenement! So was it with Burke. And when the loss of his son destroyed that buoyancy of hope so long and fondly entertained of witnessing his success in life, no active principle of vitality remained to counteract the inroads of infirmity. That loss he found it impossible to forget or to recover. Those who did not know him fancied he sustained annoyance from numerous attacks of the partizans of French opinions; no less than eight or nine answers having appeared within a few weeks to the letters on Regicide Peace. No pain however was inflicted by these missiles. The writings of the lower class

of opponents he rarely saw and never heeded ; the attacks of the higher in the way of argument, he answered and refuted ; the mere abuse of either he despised. Of the latter, an instance occurred about this time which furnishes a pretty good sample of the *justice* with which he was commonly assailed.

A bookseller named Owen, who published the Letter to a Noble Lord and was intrusted with the MS. of the first two letters of Regicide Peace for publication, represented to some friends of their author who called upon him to account for the profits of the first work, that these had been surrendered to him by that gentleman as a gift. This story Mr. Burke had no other means of disproving than by his word to the contrary, which no one who knew him could for a moment disbelieve. Unwilling however to enter into a contest on such a matter with such a man, he put up with the loss. This was not all ; for with the characteristic assurance of a pirate, Owen as soon as he found that the manuscript of "Regicide Peace," was to be withdrawn out of his hands, published it on his own account, not only without the concurrence, but against the positive prohibition of the author. This impudent invasion of literary property he attempted, in a preface to the surreptitious copy of the work to defend.* It

* One of the ablest critical journals of the time in speaking of the work, thus noticed the transaction :

"Before we proceed to consider the more important parts of these interesting and extraordinary productions, our attention is naturally attracted by the strange competition which seems to prevail between the genuine and surreptitious editions. It affords the first instance, as far as we recollect, of a literary piracy being openly avowed and defended. Hitherto no property has been thought more sacred than that of an author in his unpublished works.

"It appears, from Mr. Owen's statement, that he was entrusted with a manuscript with a view to publication ;—subject certainly to the pleasure of the author, and to every change of opinion which might take place in his mind. A trustee thus circumstanced had undoubtedly no more right to publish the work without the consent of the writer, than if the manuscript had been procured by breaking open the library at Beaconsfield. The defence set up by Mr. Owen not a little aggravates, in our opinion, the impropriety of his conduct. He informs us, that Mr. Burke, after having made him a present of the profits of his letter against the Duke of Bedford, sent some friends to demand an account of the sale of that publication. He does not tell us that he was actually compelled to refund these profits : he only affirms that he was *desired* to account for them ; and this he offers in defence of an acknowledged breach of trust."

was stopped, however, by legal interference ; and as an appropriate conclusion to such an unprincipled proceeding, his defeated cupidity found vent in an abusive advertisement against "Edmund Burke the Pensioner." He was also accustomed to say, though from such a source probably without truth, that his men who carried to Mr. Burke the proof sheets of his publications for correction, were so roundly rated for mistakes, that at length none of them would venture to approach his house, particularly when an error greater than usual had been committed. He was therefore often obliged to take them himself. Dodsley's (his preceding publisher) men told quite a different story. They represented him as affable and courteous (as was his custom indeed to the working class of people), taking particular pains to explain what he wished to be done, frequently ordering them liquor, and on withdrawing from the room, never permitting them to have the last bow. They were accustomed to remark that though he was sometimes surrounded by large and apparently confused masses of papers, he could immediately put his hand upon any particular one which might be wanted.

Toward the end of the year he was confined principally to the couch, and no longer able to write himself, employed any relative or intimate friend stopping in the house to hold the pen. In this way his correspondence during the year became extensive, in which his thoughts flow with undiminished lustre. To Dr. Hussey his letters on Roman Catholic and Irish affairs generally, were frequent and long. One of them occupies above twenty printed pages. That gentleman, it appeared, though sent to Ireland by the Duke of Portland, and having his conduct on occasions approved by the King, became embroiled with the local government by opposing, as might be supposed, the punishment of Romanist soldiers for refusing to attend Protestant worship. He appears to have been thoroughly loyal, a man of the world, sincerely attached to English connexion, and thus explicitly sounds the alarm of incipient rebellion : "They are urging those cursed (Jacobin) sentiments throughout the country, and under the name of 'United Irishmen,' this evil is extending beyond imagination. Many thousands, I am assured, are weekly sworn in such a secret manner and form as to evade all the law in those cases." From Lord Fitzwilliam, several

long and pointed letters were received at Beaconsfield in condemnation of Mr. Pitt's financial schemes, his precipitate solicitations for peace, and general conduct of the war—"You, my dear Burke," he says, "by the exertion of your great powers, have carried three-fourths of the public, but you have not carried him, and I fear all the rest will go for nothing." On our begging for peace and on the conduct of the war, Mr. Windham, though in office, writes nearly in a similar strain, giving Burke the first intimation of Lord Malmesbury's unceremonious dismissal in a tone of sarcastic ridicule. With Mr. John Bowles, afterwards known for various political pamphlets, and also with Dr. Laurence, a few letters were exchanged.

In a lighter style, more amusing and jocular yet with various hits at political affairs, several long letters were written to the agreeable and accomplished Mrs. (afterwards Lady) Crewe. She furnished him occasionally with amusing sketches of the parties, politics, and squires of Cheshire and other places, was a friend to his school, and took an active part in doing kind offices for the emigrants. To her he says, that in the "Regicide Peace" as in the Bedford letter, he had appealed to the people against the sentiments of both Ministry and Opposition, and each time they had given it in his favour. To one of her visitors then fast rising in public opinion, and who could not be other than a devout admirer of elevated genius as he had previously shewn in some published pieces, he sends a message—"Tell Mr. Canning that I am very much flattered in finding that a man of his genius and his virtue finds anything to tolerate in my feeble and belated endeavours to be useful, at a crisis of the world which calls for the efforts of a rich mind like his, in the full vigour of all his mental and of all his bodily powers; but I am soothed in seeing that I continue the object of his early partiality."

His health continuing to decline, gave the most serious alarm to his friends. A visit to Bath was again proposed; but shewing some indisposition to that place from its publicity which nervous debility rendered it unpleasant for him to meet, Mr. Windham in an earnest and affectionate letter written in the middle of January, 1797, took him to task, asking whether he *wished* to recover—whether he was aware that his "life is at this moment of more consequence

than that of any other man living"—and that danger to it would be "a loss to the world such as it could never have produced, or been known at least to produce, at any other period." He urges Bath upon him in conformity with medical recommendations, means to take down Dr. Blane to Beaconsfield for an additional opinion, solemnly adjures him to suffer no time to be lost, and promises to accompany him on the journey.

To Bath therefore he proceeded early in February, and continued till the end of May, chiefly confined to a couch. "My health," he said in a communication to a friend, "has gone down very rapidly; and I have been brought hither with very faint hopes of life, and enfeebled to such a degree as those who had known me some time ago, could scarcely think credible. Since I came hither my sufferings have been greatly aggravated, and my little strength still further reduced; so that though I am told the symptoms of my disorder begin to carry a more favourable aspect, I pass the far larger part of the twenty-four hours, indeed almost the whole, either in my bed or lying upon the couch from which I dictate this." In this letter, written on the affairs of Ireland, and indited by snatches amidst pain and suffering, he hints at something like the Union, by urging that the seat of her superior or *Imperial* politics, should be in England. "There is a great cry against English influence. I am quite sure that it is Irish influence that dreads the English habits." "I think that Great Britain would be ruined by the separation of Ireland; but as there are degrees even in ruin, it would fall the most heavily on Ireland. By such a separation, Ireland would be the most completely undone country in the world; the most wretched, the most distracted, and, in the end, the most desolate part of the habitable globe. Little do many people in Ireland consider how much of its prosperity has been owing, and still depends upon, its intimate connexion with this kingdom."

Of his stay there we have a few notices from Mr. Wilberforce, who was likewise a visitor to that popular resort at the same period. "Poor Burke came down quite emaciated. Elliot called, and a very pleasant day. Evening—Called on Burke, and sat an hour; no serious talk." Again he writes—"Burke is come here but very poorly, and Windham is visiting him. His faculties are as fresh as ever; he abstains

from talking politics." Of the vigour of his mind thus noticed, its sagacity, decision, and patriotism while suffering under extreme prostration of frame, the same authority furnishes an instance on a memorable occasion. It was the mutiny in the fleet. To civilians unacquainted with such scenes, the best mode of meeting the danger forms an arduous consideration; and such it proved to all the members of Ministry. In the eye of an officer there is but one remedy—to put it down firmly but moderately at all hazards. Grievances should be carefully redressed afterwards; and seamen had at that time many and serious disadvantages to complain of, and to a much later period; but submission to authority ought commonly to precede concession. Such was Burke's opinion and determination when Ministry were afraid to move. In the same memoranda it is noted—

"Heard (April 17th) of Portsmouth meeting; consultation with Burke." "The only letter which reached Bath that day by the cross post from Portsmouth was one from Captain Bedford, of the Royal Sovereign, to Patty More. She brought it me, and I took it at once to Burke. He could not then see me; but at his desire called again at two o'clock. The whole scene is now before me. Burke was lying on a sofa much emaciated; and Windham, Laurence, and some other friends were around him. The attention shewn to Burke by all that party was just like the treatment of Ahithophel of old. 'It was as if one went to inquire of the oracle of the Lord.' I reported to them the account I had received, and Burke being satisfied of its authority, we held a consultation on the proper course for government to follow. Windham set off for London the same night with the result of our deliberations. *Burke's advice was very much the same as Sir Charles Middleton's had been on a similar occasion*, which Pitt often mentioned as an instance of Sir Charles's promptitude and resolution. Pitt and Lord Chatham, then first Lord of the Admiralty, had sent for Middleton and met him with the information. 'Bad news, Sir Charles, from the fleet; a ship has mutinied; what are we to do?' Sir Charles, who had always been an enemy to pressing, and who actually resigned his office of Comptroller of the Navy because he could not carry out some reforms which would have prevented the breaking out of the great mutiny, immediately replied—'You know how ill I think

these poor fellows have been used, but now that it is come to a mutiny there is but one thing to be done ; you must shew them that you have the superiority ; you must order a ninety-gun ship on each side of her, and sink her on the spot if she does not at once submit.' They were staggered, and said doubtfully, 'That is a strong measure ; what if they should refuse to obey ?' 'Then indeed all would be over ; but they will not refuse to obey if you give the order resolutely, and it is the only thing that can be done.' He left them still undetermined, and in a few minutes came back with the despatch drawn up, and seeing still some hesitation, he said, 'Pray sign it instantly ; there is much to be done in the office, and we shall scarcely be ready in time to save the post.'

No clouded or weakened mental condition accompanied his extreme infirmity of body. Previous to this visit, he had been occupied on the fourth letter on a Regicide Peace, and while there gave it occasional additions. He corresponded likewise, among others, with Mr. Windham, who informed him that Mr. Pitt with whom he first saw it, had been reading the surreptitious "Conduct of the Minority," was highly gratified with it, deemed the style a model for the subjects discussed, more forcible than any other, and more in accordance with general taste. Letters also passed with Dr. Hussey, Mrs. Crewe, Mr. Arthur Young, and Mrs. Leadbeater, expounding to the eminent agriculturist in a few sentences those doctrines he had always maintained, and which are now designated more popularly as free trade.

The day before he quitted Bath, a letter was dictated to Mrs. Leadbeater, and signed by his tremulous hand. It was among the last dispatched of his private letters. "I feel as I ought to do your constant hereditary kindness to me and mine. What you have heard of my illness is far from exaggerated. I am, thank God, alive, and that is all. Hastening to my dissolution, I have to bless Providence that I do not suffer a great deal of pain. * * Mrs. Burke has a tolerable share of health in every respect, except much use of her limbs. She remembers your mother's most good-natured attentions, as I am sure I do, with much gratitude. I have ever been an admirer of your talents and virtues, and shall ever wish most cordially for every thing which can tend to your credit and satisfaction. I therefore congratulate you very heartily on the birth of your son ; and pray remember

me to the representative of your family, who I hope still keeps up the school of which I have so tender a remembrance ; though after so long an absence, and so many unpleasant events of every kind that have distracted my thoughts, I hardly dare to ask for any one, not knowing whether they are living or dead, lest I should be the means of awakening unpleasant recollections. P.S. Pray remember me to Mr. Leadbeater. I have been at Bath these four months to no purpose, and am therefore to be removed to my own house at Beaconsfield to-morrow, to be nearer to a habitation more permanent, humbly and fearfully hoping that my better part may find a better mansion."

There is something very touching in the mild and cheerful tone of this resignation to the Divine will, as well as in the allusions to his usual residence being so near to where he had determined should be his final resting place (Beaconsfield Church.) Of this letter the then Bishop of Meath justly observed in a communication to the lady to whom it is addressed ; "The great scene on which Providence gifted and allotted him to move was now closing ; and no record can ever be produced to mark the leading features of his character so strongly as that you possess in this letter. It shows him still cherishing the early affections of his heart, among the higher cares which the station he had attained imposed upon him ; and after having controlled the destinies of the world, as *all now* agree he did, by his later writings, turning his last thoughts to the retired, unassuming daughter of the friend of his youth."*

To Beaconsfield, where he had enjoyed so many of the honours and comforts of life, he returned to die ; for there is something of satisfaction to the human heart in breathing our last and in depositing our bones in the spot where we have spent the most honourable and useful part of our being. "It is so far at least," said he to some one just before quitting Bath, "on my way to the tomb, and I may as well travel it alive as dead." While awaiting the event which was delayed for a month longer, he gave directions about the disposal of some of his papers, particularly desiring that the chief of those relating to the impeachment should be published, repeating the same opinion of the whole proceeding

which he had always expressed. Public affairs occupied much of his thoughts to the last moment: "Never," said he, "succumb to the enemy; it is a struggle for your existence as a nation; and if you must die, die with the sword in your hand; but I have no fears whatever for the result; there is a salient, living principle of energy in the public mind of England which only requires proper direction to enable her to withstand this or any other ferocious foe. Persevere, therefore, till this tyranny be overpast." To his own increasing weakness he submitted with the same placid and Christian-like resignation, undisturbed by a murmur; hoping, as he said, to obtain the Divine mercy through the intercession of a blessed Redeemer, which, in his own words, "he had long sought with unfeigned humiliation, and to which he looked with a trembling hope."

Shortly before the fatal event took place, Earl Fitzwilliam communicated to Mr. Fox the information that it could not be far distant; and that gentleman having sent off a letter of inquiry on the subject to Mrs. Burke, received next day by express an answer couched in nearly the following terms. Whatever be the opinion of the rigidity with which the subject of this note performed what he thought his duty, it is impossible not to admire the exalted principle which prompted it.

"Mrs. Burke presents her compliments to Mr. Fox, and thanks him for his obliging inquiries. Mrs. Burke communicated his letter to Mr. Burke, and by his desire has to inform Mr. Fox that it has cost Mr. Burke the most heartfelt pain to obey the stern voice of his duty in rending asunder a long friendship, but that he deemed this sacrifice necessary; that his principles continue the same; and that in whatever of life may yet remain to him, he conceives that he must live for others and not for himself. Mr. Burke is convinced that the principles which he has endeavoured to maintain are necessary to the welfare and dignity of his country, and that these principles can be enforced only by the general persuasion of his sincerity. For herself, Mrs. Burke has again to express her gratitude to Mr. Fox for his inquiries."

A presentiment seems to have been felt of the moment of his sunnons from the world. Several of the previous hours were employed in expressing forgiveness of all who had in

any manner injured him, and in requesting the same from all whom his general or particular infirmities had offended. Messages of affectionate remembrance passed to many absent friends, among others, as we learn from his sons, to Wilberforce for his book on Christianity : "That great man (Burke)" they write, "was said by Mr. Windham, when he had arranged his worldly matters, to have amused his dying hours with the writings of Addison (on the immortality of the soul.) He might have added what serious minds would have gladly heard. 'Have you been told,' Mr. Henry Thornton asks Mrs. Hannah More, 'that Burke spent much of the two last days of his life in reading Wilberforce's book, and said that he derived much comfort from it, and that if he lived he should thank Wilberforce for having sent such a book into the world. So says Mrs. Crewe, who was with Burke at the time.' Before his death Mr. Burke summoned Dr. Laurence to his side, and committed specially to him the expression of these thanks."*

At intervals, he recapitulated his motives of action in several great public emergencies ; his then thoughts on the alarming state of the country, "the ruling passion strong in death ;" gave some private directions connected with his approaching decease ; and afterward listened again to the perusal, by his desire, of a few of the papers of Addison. These duties finished, his attendants, with Mr. Nagle of the War-office, a relation, were conveying him to bed, when indistinctly articulating a blessing on those around him, he sank down and after a momentary struggle expired, July 9th, 1797, in the sixty-eighth year of his age. "His end," said Dr. Laurence with great truth, "was suited to the simple greatness of mind which he displayed through life, every way unaffected, without levity, without ostentation, full of natural grace and dignity. He appeared neither to wish nor to dread, but patiently and placidly to await the appointed hour of his dissolution." "When I have revolved his various labours," writes the author of the Pursuits of Literature, after an animated apostrophe to his memory, "I would record in lasting characters, and in our holiest and most honourable temple, the departed orator of England, the statesman, and the Christian, Edmund Burke ! '*Remuneratio ejus cum Altissimo !*'"

* Life of Wilberforce, vol. ii. p. 208.

When examined after death, his heart was found to be preternaturally enlarged, affording confirmation to the belief, if the common idea of sympathy between the heart and the affections of the mind be founded in fact, that grief for the loss of his son killed him. An abscess had likewise formed in his side, which some of his medical attendants, among whom was Dr. Lynn of Windsor, considered of a cancerous nature. Sir Gilbert Blane who had been previously consulted, informed me in a long conversation on this subject, that he had arrived at that conclusion from the first, of the disease being a scirrhus affection of the stomach.

On the 15th of July he was buried according to his desire, in Beaconsfield church, in the same grave with his son and brother. The body had been removed to the house of Mrs. Salisbury Haviland in the town of Beaconsfield the previous day for the convenience of a walking procession to the church, in which ceremony seventy members of the benefit society he had patronised, clad in mourning, preceded the corpse. "Soon after five o'clock," writes the antiquarian correspondent whose communications have already been noticed, "an immense number of carriages had arrived in the town from London and other places, which conveyed many distinguished members of both Houses of Parliament to pay the last mark of attention to the remains of this admired and celebrated man. I never witnessed a more imposing solemnity. It was not merely mourning in exterior; I knew many, more especially among the poorer classes, who felt, and showed that they felt, the loss of a friend. The pall was borne by

Sir Gilbert Elliot, afterwards Earl of Minto.

The Speaker of the House of Commons, now Lord Sidmouth.

The Duke of Portland, K.G.

Earl Fitzwilliam.

Duke of Devonshire, K.G.

Earl of Inchiquin afterwards Marquis of Thomond

Mr. Windham.

Lord Chancellor Loughborough, afterwards Earl of Roslyn.

"Few gentry of the surrounding country, as you have observed, omitted to be in attendance on this occasion; and all the neighbouring pulpits in alluding to his loss paid that tribute to his private virtues which none, whatever might be their political opinions, could well withhold." Mr. Fox proposed in the House of Commons that he should be interred in the national receptacle for illustrious talents, Westminster Abbey—an honour which he was informed the terms of the

Will of the deceased precluded. The writer has been informed from authority which he cannot question (Mr. Haviland Burke), that this fact was communicated to Mr. Fox previous to the proposal being made in the House; and the inference drawn from it by some of Burke's friends was, that as he knew the proposal could not be complied with, he introduced it to preserve a seeming show of liberality towards his memory which was not in reality felt. This it is to be hoped is a mistake, or at least an erroneous conclusion. But it is true, that the reply of Mr. Fox to a letter of Mr. Nagle, who wrote off to him an account of the decease of his old associate soon after it took place, and detailing some particulars of the conversation which preceded it, was a cold common-place.*

In his will, disinclination is expressed to unnecessary expense in the funeral, or to posthumous honours beyond a simple inscription on the flag stone or on a small tablet on the church wall. This restriction, though in accordance with his unpretending habits, may be considered an instance of

* Dr. Burney who attended him to the grave, gave the following account to his daughter—"I was invited to poor Mr. Burke's funeral by Mrs. Crewe and two notes from Beaconsfield. Malone and I went to Bulstrode together in my car this day seven-night, with two horses added to mine. Mrs. Crewe had invited me thither when she went down first. We found the Duke of P. (Portland) there; and the Duke of Devonshire and Windham came to dinner. The Chancellor and Speaker of the House of Commons, could not leave London till four o'clock, but arrived a little after seven. We all set off together to Beaconsfield, where we found the rest of the pall-bearers—Lord Fitzwilliam, Lord Inchiquin and Sir Gilbert Elliot, with Doctors King and Laurence, Fred. North, Dudley North, and many of the deceased's private friends, though by his repeated injunctions the funeral was to be very private. We had all hatbands, scarfs, and gloves; and he left a list to whom rings of remembrance are to be sent, among whom my name occurred; and a jeweller has been here for my measure. I went back to Bulstrode by invitation, with the two Dukes, the Chancellor and Speaker, Windham, Malone, and Secretary King. I stayed there till Sunday evening, and got home just before the dreadful storm. The Duke was extremely civil and hospitable—pressed me much to stay longer and go with them, the Chancellor, Speaker, Windham, and Mrs. Crewe, to Penn, to see the School founded by Mr. Burke for the male children of French emigrant nobles; but I could not with prudence stay. ••• So much for poor Mr. Burke—certainly one of the greatest men of the present century; and I think I might say the best orator and statesman of modern times. He had his passions and prejudices to which I did not subscribe; but I always admired his great abilities, friendship, and urbanity; and it would be ungrateful in you and me, to whom he was certainly partial, not to feel and lament his loss."

self-denial in a public man; for though rank, and honours, and money may be refused by such when alive, there are perhaps few who would decline the monumental brass, or marble, or inscription, which conveys to posterity some intimation that their merits, were at least in part estimated and valued by their contemporaries. His reason for advertising to the subject he expresses to be "because I know the partial kindness to me of some of my friends; but I have had in my life too much of noise and compliment."—The first clause in this testamentary document marks in a manner equally striking, his piety, and attachment to his departed kindred:—"According to the ancient, good, and laudable custom of which my heart and understanding recognize the propriety, I bequeath my soul to God, hoping for his mercy only through the merits of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. My body I desire to be buried in the church at Beaconsfield, near to the bodies of my dearest brother and my dearest son, in all humility praying that as we have lived in perfect unity together, we may together have a part in the resurrection of the just." His brother-in-law, Mr. John Nugent, he bequeaths to the protection of his political friends, in order to provide for his interests; and to his "entirely beloved and incomparable wife, Jane Mary Burke," is given the whole of his property in fee-simple. To his niece, Mrs. Haviland, whose husband was alive at the time the will was drawn up a legacy was left of £1000.

On a tablet such as he desired, in the south aisle of Beaconsfield church, is the following inscription:—

Near this place lies interred all
That was mortal of the
Right Honourable Edmund Burke,
Who died on the 9th of July, 1797, aged 68 years:

In the same grave are deposited the remains of his only son, Richard Burke, Esq., representative in Parliament for the Borough of Malton.

Who died the 2d August, 1794, aged 35:

Of his brother Richard Burke, Esq., Barrister at Law,
And Recorder of the City of Bristol,
Who died on the 4th February, 1794:

And of his widow Jane Mary Burke, who died on the 2d April,
1812, aged 78.*

* A friend adds a few further particulars.

"On a mural monument in the south aisle of Beaconsfield church—The arms of Burke impaling Nugent, sculptured in bold relief.

Mrs. Burke continued to reside at Butler's Court, visited and esteemed by all the friends of her late husband, among whom Mr. and Mrs. Windham were at all times particularly attentive, until her death, April 2, 1812, being previously much crippled in her limbs by rheumatism. It was believed for some time that she was the author of a novel published in 1800, called "Elliott, or Vicissitudes of Early Life," but her friends knew this was not the fact, though the publisher said he had had correspondence on the subject with a lady of that name residing at Beaconsfield, whom he understood to be the widow of Edmund Burke. The

"On a cross gules, the first quarter charged with a lion rampant sable—Burke impaling Nugent—Ermine, two bars gules—Nugent.

"Crest—On a wreath, a mountain cat sejant guardant proper, gorged with a plain collar and chained or."

From the intimate connexion of this family with that of Haviland, it may not be extraneous to introduce, from the authority of my antiquarian correspondent, the mortuary notices upon its members in Penn church; the words of the inscription upon the General, few as they are, but expressive, being the suggestion of Mr. Burke.

"Near the vestry door, on a tablet sculptured with military trophies and other appropriate emblems, by Hickey—the arms of Haviland—argent three embattled castles sable, impaling—Aston—argent—a fess and in chief three lozenges sable—incribed—here rest the remains of General William Haviland, late Colonel of the 45th Regiment of Infantry.—An experienced and successful commander without ostentation. A firm friend without profession. A good man without pretence. He died Sept. 16, 1784, aged 67 years.—Also of Mary, relict of Wm. Townly Balfour, Esq. of the kingdom of Ireland, who departed this life August 2, 1789, aged 56 years—after having, by her exemplary patience, pious resignation under a long and severe illness, impressed a genuine value upon those amiable qualities both of the understanding and of the heart, which made her the delight of all who knew her.—Also of Mary, wife of Samuel Ruxton Fitzherbert, Esq., of the kingdom of Ireland,—in whom simplicity of manners adorned a fine understanding—the love of her duty adorned the practice of it—and her affection was rendered inestimable by the sincerity and truth with which it was accompanied. She died Sept. 13th, 1786, aged 29 years. This monument, sacred to the memory of the best of husbands, an affectionate twin sister, and a dutiful daughter, is erected by their disconsolate survivor, Salisbury Haviland.

"Mrs. Salisbury Haviland herself was buried at Penn, October 6, 1807, and her unmarried sister, Abigail Aston, who had lived with her, was likewise interred Feb. 11th, 1814, aged 80 years.—And as the more humble friends of Mr. Burke's family must not be forgotten in this list of the departed, it may be mentioned that those old and faithful servants, Webster and his wife, repose near the remains of their master, in the cemetery at Beaconsfield; the former dying in December, 1810, the latter in August, 1818."

real author however was a Mrs. Burke who published the "Sorrows of Edith," and other tales. Some time previous to her death, she sold the mansion and estate of Butler's Court to her neighbour, James Du Pré, Esq. of Wilton Park, for £38,500, reserving the use of the house and grounds during her life, and for one year after death. Mrs. Thomas Haviland, the niece of Mr. Burke, lived with her until her decease, under the promise of being made her heir, which however did not take effect. She received however a legacy of £5000, the remainder of the property being bequeathed to Mrs. Burke's own nephew, Mr. Nugent.

Mrs. Haviland was a most amiable and deserving woman, not unworthy of relationship to her celebrated uncle, who in his letters, was always lavish in her praises.* She retired to live at Brompton for the benefit of her health, and died there in March, 1816, at the age of forty-six.—Her son, the late Thomas Haviland Burke, of Lincoln's Inn, in consequence of Mr. Burke's brothers dying unmarried, became the only representative of the family, and as such assumed the name and arms of his uncle, no other person standing in the same, or indeed any near relationship to that distinguished man. His son Mr. Edmund Burke, now at Etou, and two daughters survive. The library, and all the tokens of regard and admiration which he had received from the good and great of the world, devolved with the bulk of the property to Mr. Nugent. The pieces of sculpture which ornamented the house were sold by auction by Christie, and some of them grace the British Museum.

An old and costly carved chair of particular workmanship, which had been for many years used in the House of Commons, was, upon some alteration there, displaced and presented to Mr. Burke. It was sold among his other remains, and purchased by Mr. Peregrine Dealtry, of Bradenham House, and after his decease in 1814 was presented by his sisters to Dr. Parr, who preserved it as one of the great ornaments and curiosities of Hatton. On his death in March 1825, it was transferred by bequest to Dr. John Johnstone,

* Having occasion to consult an eminent surgeon in London (Sir C. B.), after being a widow, he fell in love with her, and being extremely rich, made an offer of a splendid settlement along with his hand, which however, from some scruples as to the propriety of second marriages, she thought proper to decline.

of Birmingham, in whose possession it now is.—Such is the regard felt for even trifling memorials of the great, and the desire to be the possessors.

Butler's Court was burnt down on the morning of the 23rd of April, 1813, having been let to a clergyman named Jones, for the purpose of a school, in whose occupation the accident took place. It is remarkable that Cliefden, the seat of his intimate friend Lord Inchiquin, only five miles distant, shared the same fate a few years before, being burnt down in May 1795. Cliefden, to the loss of which Burke adverts in one of his letters is celebrated by Pope; and there George IV. passed some of his younger days. This house, as well as Butler's Court, was built upon the plan of Buckingham House, with a grand centre connected to wings by corridors.

CHAPTER XVI.

His Person—Manners—Habits—Conversational Powers and Sallies—Private Character—Ardour of Temper and imputed Irritability—Contemporary Opinions formed of him.

IN adverting to the public and private characteristics of this celebrated man, there will be found so much to commend, that simple justice may run the risk of being deemed indiscriminate panegyric. Against this I am solicitous to guard by giving in addition to any estimate of my own of those merits the opinions of others more competent perhaps to convey a correct judgment. Several of these were well acquainted with him, as well as with the facts they respectively state, and some being opposed to him on political topics will not be suspected of bestowing undeserv'd praise.

To give a just representation of a great political character, whose life has been spent in the constant contention inseparable at least, from the calling he pursues, is a laborious indeed, but not an impracticable undertaking. To give such a representation as shall be universally acceptable, is from the spirit of party, not always easy. A statesman is usually to the mass of the world an object of suspicion during, or near to, the time in which he lives. If there be two ways of construing his conduct, the unfavourable side is commonly taken;

yet the contrary impression would be nearer to truth, for of all public men he is the most interested in doing, or in aiming to do right, whether he looks to the continuance of present power, or to the possession of that which every man would have if he could, namely, posthumous reputation. It is the duty therefore, of the biographer or historian diligently to attend to this; to give even to questionable characters an attentive and impartial, if not favourable consideration. This is the business not merely of common charity but of strict justice; for notwithstanding so many exclamations against poor human nature, much more of good is found among mankind than we are willing to acknowledge. Many statesmen, however unpopular or imprudent in their politics, have not been without high public as well as private virtues. But on the other hand, where no crimes are charged, where no suspicion attaches, and where even adversaries have been compelled to render praise, the task of the narrator is necessarily more agreeable. Such is the case with Mr. Burke. Judged therefore by this standard, he will be acknowledged to be not merely a great but an eminently good man, in whose character or conduct there will be found little which the most devoted admirer need be afraid to probe, little of human infirmity over which an enemy can triumph; for his errors whatever they were, chiefly arose from pushing the passions of virtue to excess.

In person he was about five feet ten inches high, erect, well-formed, never very robust; when young, expert in the sports of his country and time, active in habits suited to his years until his last illness, and always it need scarcely be added, particularly active in mind, having nothing of what he called "that master-vice, sloth," in his composition. His countenance in early life possessed considerable sweetness, and by his female friends was esteemed handsome. At a later period, it did not appear to be marked, particularly when unexcited, by expression, which from the well-known qualities of his mind many persons expected to see. But the lines of thought were evident, and when animated by discussion, there was an occasional working of the brow, occasioned partly by being near-sighted, which let the attentive observer into the secret of the powerful workings within. From this defective state of vision, he frequently, from about the year 1780, wore spectacles. An Irish

literary lady of talent—and ladies we may admit are competent judges in such matters—who enjoyed the pleasure of his acquaintance, thus describes him to me at the age of fifty.

“He was the handsomest man I recollect to have seen; his stature about six feet, well-made, portly, but not corpulent. His countenance was such as a painter would find it difficult precisely to draw (and indeed I always understood they complained of the difficulty): its expression frequently varying, but always full of benevolence, marked in my opinion by strong intellect, and softened by sensibility. * * * A full-length portrait of him hangs in the Examination Hall of Dublin University; the figure, features, and complexion are like his; but the countenance, as a whole, by no means does him justice. * * * He was a most delightful companion, and had the art of rendering the timid easy in his company. His conversation, which was often serious and instructive, abounded at other times with wit, pleasantry, and good humour; whatever subject he spoke upon, and he spoke upon all, he excelled in, as if it had formed a particular study; and his language though sometimes considered ornamented on public occasions, was distinguished by a fascinating simplicity, yet powerful and appropriate beyond what I can tell.”—Another lady, with whose husband, who was a relation, he occasionally spent a day in Lamb’s Conduit Street in London, describes him nearly in the same terms—“His address frank, yet dignified; his conversation interesting and various; and, particularly in female society, playful and amusing in a high degree.”—The best pictures of him are those painted by Reynolds, Romney and Barry, from one of the former of which the engraving which accompanies this volume is taken. The original is in possession of Earl Fitzwilliam, being bequeathed to him by Mrs. Burke. That which hangs in the Examination Theatre of the University of Dublin was taken at a much later period of life, the face shorter than in Sir Joshua’s, with something of contemplative severity in the expression. A better likeness, as is commonly said, is that modelled in wax and finely finished by T. R. Poole, but it should be remembered that it was taken at a later period of life than any of the pictures.

Of the bust by Hickey, which has been noticed as having been presented by his nephew, Mr. Haviland

Burke, to the British Museum, the history is somewhat curious. It appears that Queen Caroline, when Princess of Wales, professing great admiration of Mr. Burke, wrote to Mrs. Burke at Butler's Court, requesting permission for a cast to be taken from the bust in her possession for a collection which she was then making of the celebrated men of the British nation. Mrs. Burke, pleased at having due honour paid to her husband, and conceiving that this memorial of him could not be better or more safely placed than in royal custody, offered to her Royal Highness's acceptance a present of the bust itself. The offer was accepted. No such collection however as had been stated, was ever formed. At the sale of her Royal Highness's effects at Connaught House, the bust having been found amid some household rubbish, received among other articles a place in the catalogue of the auctioneer. In this situation Mrs. Thomas Haviland heard of it, and gave a commission to have this relic of her uncle privately purchased; but the sum demanded being exorbitant, it was thought better to await public sale. Here, a strong contest for its possession ensued with Turnerelli, the sculptor, who expressed some anxiety for its acquisition upon which he put a high value; and to him in consequence of a mistake of the agent of Mrs. Haviland, it was knocked down. A dispute arising, it was again put up. Turnerelli in the mean time finding that as a relative of Mr. Burke had determined on the purchase, further contention on his part would be vain, relinquished his opposition, and therefore it was eventually procured for a comparatively small sum.

Like Mr. Fox, Burke appeared somewhat negligent in dress, being latterly distinguished by a tight brown coat seeming to impede freedom of motion and a little bob-wig with curls, which in addition to spectacles, made his person recognizable by those who had never previously seen him the moment he rose to speak in the House of Commons. Though an ardent lover of poetry, which he prized at every period of life, and more especially that of Milton* as furnish-

* Like Johnson, Goldsmith, and many others, he had a very poor opinion, as is evident in his letter of criticism on the arts to Barry, of Ossian; besides which, three-fourths at least, he said, of the productions ascribed to that ancient he considered to be forgeries, so entirely, that the writer had not even tradition to build upon, though in others no doubt he had made use of local and romantic tales. "Nothing," he said, "but

ing the grandest imagery in the language, yet contrary to the common idea that love for poetry and for music go together he had little ear for the latter. Mr. Fox, it is known, had none at all; and it has been remarked that the ears of Mr. Pitt and Dr. Johnson were equally tuneless. From the slight peculiarity in his gait noticed in a previous page, Sir Joshua who as an artist had an eye to these things, used to say that it sometimes gave him the idea of his having two left legs. He received people frequently in the library and dressing-room; and here when busily occupied on important subjects, which during much of his parliamentary life was the case, he was accustomed to dictate letters with apparently careless facility. With writings intended for the press he was on the contrary fastidious. Great pains and frequent and careful revisions were expended upon such whenever he aimed at making a strong impression. Blots and erasures were of course numerous, so as to render his manuscripts frequently difficult to decipher to those not accustomed to the task. The matter itself of his compositions was rarely altered; but the arrangement, illustration, and turn of the sentences, very frequently. Habit however had rendered the most perspicuous modes of expression so familiar, that in this respect his most hastily written and confidential communications offer little for critical remark.

His address in private life possessed something of a chivalrous air—noble in bearing, yet unaffected and unreserved, impressing upon strangers of every rank by his force and novelty of remark the conviction of being a remarkable man. "Sir," said Johnson, to exemplify this, "if Burke were to go into a stable to give directions about his horse, the ostler would say, 'We have had an extraordinary man here.'" His manner in mixed society was unobtrusive, surrendering at once his desire to talk to any one who had, or who thought he had, the least claim to be heard. "Where a loud-tongued talker was in company," writes Cumberland, "Edmund Burke declined all claims upon attention." When Johnson one evening seized upon every topic of discourse that was started, and an auditor after quitting the company, remarked to Burke that he should have liked to hear more from another person, meaning him, "Oh no," replied the latter, "it is enough for me to have rung the bell to him." To the lower

the blind nationality of Scotchmen themselves gave the least countenance to the imposture.

class of people, it has been remarked, he was always affable. When a youth who was on a visit to him at Beaconsfield, treated the respectful salutation of a servant somewhat negligently Mr. Burke called him aside, and terminated a remonstrance on the subject by saying, "Never permit yourself to be outdone in courtesy by your inferiors." Of literary society he was always fond, preferring it more perhaps than his own political interests demanded, to that which was merely distinguished by rank and fashion.

His conversational powers partook of the same fulness of mind which distinguished his eloquence. They never ran dry; the supply for the subject always exceeded the demand. "Burke," said Johnson—and the admiration of such a man is of itself a passport to fame—"is never what we call humdrum; never in a hurry to begin conversation, at a loss to carry it on, or eager to leave off." On many other occasions the moralist celebrated the excellence of "his talk," and though in some degree of a different character from his own, it was rarely less instructive, and little less forcible. Among friends, his sallies of thought were frequently of a serious cast, sometimes philosophical, sometimes moral, the elevation of the sentiment commonly forming a contrast to the unaffected simplicity with which it was delivered—for here he did not often play the orator. A profound reflection, or great moral truth, often slipped from him as if by accident, without seeming to have cost any trouble in the elaboration. While Johnson's throes in the delivery of bright thoughts were sometimes obvious, and he took care by a loud and authoritative manner, to force the offspring of wit or wisdom upon his hearers. What we have of the sayings of Burke make us anxious for more. He has himself indeed drawn up the line-of-battle of his genius to the public gaze in his works; but who does not regret that he had no Boswell in attendance to note down the transient sallies of playful and social hours—to collect and arrange for posterity the flying squadron of his brain?

When Croft's *Life of Dr. Young* was spoken of as a good imitation of Johnson's style, "No, no," said he, "it is not a good imitation of Johnson; it has all his pomp without his force; it has all the nodosities of the oak without its strength; it has all the contortions of the sybil without the inspiration." Speaking of the new sect of philosophers of 1793, "These fellows," said he, "have a wrong twist in their

heads, which ten to one gives them a wrong twist in their hearts also." When told of Godwin's definition of gratitude in Political Justice, "I should take care to spare him the commission of the opposite vice by never conferring upon him a favour." "Swaggering paradoxes," he added, "when examined, often sneak into pitiful logomachies." Of reasoning upon political theories, he observed, "The *majors* make a pompous figure in the battle, but the victory of truth depends upon the little *minor* of circumstances." When a present of wine to the Literary Club was almost expended, he playfully observed, "I understand the hogshead of claret which this society was favoured with by the Dean (Barnard) is nearly out: I think he should be written to, to send another of the same kind. Let the request be made with a happy ambiguity of expression, so that we may have the chance of his sending it also as a present." Dr. Johnson was voted secretary, or *dictator* for the occasion. "Were I your dictator," said the moralist, "you should have no wine. It would be my business, *cavere ne quid detrimenti Respublica caperet*, and wine is dangerous. Rome was ruined by luxury." "If you allow no wine as dictator," said Burke, "you shall not have me for your master of horse."

Like Johnson, he preferred London as a place of constant residence, in order to avoid the inquisitorial remarks of a country town. Boswell observes on this, "Mr. Burke, whose orderly and amiable domestic habits might make the eye of observation less irksome to him than to most men, said once very pleasantly in my hearing, 'Though I have the honour to represent Bristol, I should not like to live there; I should be obliged to be so much *upon my good behaviour*.'" On the question whether a man would live his life over again if it were in his power, he used an ingenious argument. "Every man (said he) would live his life over again; for every man is willing to go on and make an addition to his life, which as he grows older he has no reason to think will be better, or even so good as what has preceded." He had a very poor opinion of the merits, literary or moral, of the "Beggar's Opera." "There is nothing exhibited in that piece (said he) which a correct man would wish to see, and nothing taught in it which any man would wish to learn."

At table his habits were temperate, preferring the lighter to the stronger wines, in opposition to Johnson's gradation

of liquors, "claret for boys, port for men, brandy for heroes;" "then," said Burke, "give me claret, for I like to be a boy, and partake of the honest hilarity of youth." At a later period of life, when exhausted by mental exertion, or attacks of indigestion arising from close application, he was accustomed to take large quantities of water, as hot as it could be drank; "*warm* water, (said he) sickens, but *hot* water stimulates." In allusion partly to this habit, the writer of a piece in imitation of "Retaliation," who applies the different kinds of wine, as Goldsmith had done dishes, to his characters—as port to Johnson, champagne to Garrick, burgundy to Reynolds, thus says of the orator:

To Burke a pure libation bring,
Fresh drawn from pure *Castalian* spring;
With civic oak the goblet bind,
Fit emblem of his patriot mind;
Let *Clio* as his taster sip,
And *Hermes* hand it to his lip.

An amiable feature in his disposition was dislike to anything like detraction, or that insinuation against private character too often tolerated even in what is called good society, which without amounting to slander, produces nearly similar effects. When this occurred in his own house by any one with whom he was familiar, he would directly check it, or drop a hint to that effect—"Now that you have begun with his defects," he would say, "I presume you mean to finish with a catalogue of his good qualities;" and sometimes said, though mildly, "censoriousness is allied to none of the virtues." When remarks of this kind were introduced by others whom it might have been rude to interrupt, he took the part of the accused by apologies, or by urging a different construction of their actions, and as soon as he could, changed the subject; exemplifying the advice he once familiarly and wisely gave to a grave and anxious acquaintance prone to querulous lamentations, "Regard not trifles, my dear Sir; live pleasantly."

A dispute occurring with the lord of the manor in which his property at Beaconsfield was situated, about the right of ownership in a number of oak trees which stood outside of the park-paling, it was referred to the decision of a court of law. So confident was his adversary of gaining the cause, that he had directed the bell-ringers to be in readiness, the moment the news arrived, to celebrate his victory. The

result proved contrary to what he expected ; and Mr. Burke's servants, thinking their master entitled to the same demonstration of village joy upon his success, were proceeding to express it, when hearing what was going on he gave peremptory orders to desist. "It is bad enough to quarrel with a neighbour," said he, "without attempting to triumph over him;" and added, when the intention of the other was urged, "What *he* might have done is of no consequence; it is necessary to consider what *I* should do."

Johnson, who denied him scarcely any other talent or merit, would not admit that he possessed wit; he always got into the mire, he said, by attempting it. Wilkes, however, who certainly was no mean judge of that faculty, thought differently; so did Boswell; so did Windham; so did Courtenay, himself a wit, who thus commences an ode addressed to Malone, from Bath—

Whilst you illumine Shakspeare's page,
And dare the future critic's rage,
Or on the past refine;
Here many an eve I pensive sit,
No Burke pours out the stream of wit,
—No Boswell joys o'er wine.

Dr. Robertson, the historian, maintained he had a great flow of wit, as his surprising allusions, brilliant sallies of vivacity, and novel and ingenious conceits exhibited daily in his conversation and speeches in Parliament, furnished evidence. Dr. Beattie entertained the same opinion. Alluding to the disinclination of Johnson to admit the possession of this talent in men to whom the world generally allowed it, he says, in one of his letters; "Even Lord Chesterfield, and *what is more strange, even Mr. Burke*, he would not allow to have wit." Sir Joshua Reynolds likewise agreed in the opinion of his fertility in wit, observing, "That he has often heard Burke say in the course of an evening ten good things, each of which would have served a noted wit (whom he named) to live upon for a twelvemonth." Nearly the same opinion was entertained and expressed by many successive Houses of Commons, and more especially by those members, and they were no small number, who smarted under its lash—and among whom were frequent exclamations against "the wantonness of his wit and the licentiousness of his eloquence,"—the former a quality which as an auxiliary in

debate when under prudent management and subservient to something more solid, he found very effective. Lord North was in this respect his only competitor; and Mr. Sheridan afterwards occasionally his only superior. Mr. Pitt, when he had no more effectual answer to give to the keener sallies of the Member for Malton, which was not unfrequently the case in the war of words they had so long carried on, once termed them, "the overflowings of a mind, the richness of whose wit was unchecked for the time by its wisdom;" and an able anonymous writer, during the American war, among other distinguishing characteristics of his mind, particularly points to his "sarcastic wit." All reports of his speeches in the earlier part of his career continually allude to "his wit."

For Johnson's remark there was some foundation in occasional fits of punning to which he gave way round the social table among intimate friends, in order as he said, to amuse the ladies; and these were sometimes so indifferent as to draw down smart rallies from his niece, Miss French, with "Really, uncle, that is very poor." "There now, you have quite spoiled it; we expected something better." But there was some little malicious pleasure even in his failures; for the less credit he gained by his efforts, the more he was accustomed to smile at the disappointment of those who were in expectation of hearing something very fine. This play upon words was not always dignified, as we find in the conclusion of a note to Mrs. Haviland, in allusion to the military title of her husband:—"In order that I may turn over a new leaf with you, in wishing you, and all with you, in *General*, and in *particular*, a thousand and one happy years—when may every one of them, and even the odd one, be as pleasant, but a little more real than the Thousand and one Arabian Entertainments! This we all cordially wish. Mrs. Balfour is well, to all appearance, of all rheumatism. May you all be well of all complaints. God bless you. Yours ever, my dear Madam, Sirs, young and middle aged—for self, wife, and son, &c."

His more amusing sallies did not lie, like Johnson's, in cutting *repartee*, as in a more playful strain, though by no means destitute of pungency; sometimes quaint and humorous, sometimes coarse enough; frequently of classical origin or allusion, as several of the specimens preserved by Boswell evince; but without the biting severity of the lexi-

cographer which he characterized on one occasion very promptly and happily in reply to Dr. Robertson the historian, who observing that Johnson's rebukes were but "righteous oil which did not break the head;" "Oil!" replied Mr. Burke, "oil of vitriol!" When his friend the Rev. Dr. Marlay was appointed to the Deanery of Ferns, "I do not like the name," said he, "it sounds so like a *barren* title." Alluding to livings, he observed that Horace had a good one in view, in speaking of—*Est modus in rebus sunt certi denique fines*; which he translated, "a modus in the tithes and fines certain." When some one inquired whether the Isle of Man was worth a journey thither to see, "By all means," said Burke, "the proper study of *mankind* is *man*." Boswell, when trying to give a definition of man, called him a *cooking* animal; "Your definition is good," replied Burke; "I now see the full force of the common proverb, 'there is reason in the roasting of eggs.'" When the same industrious chronicler was describing some learned ladies assembled around, and vying in attention to a worthy and tall friend of theirs (Johnson), "Ay," said Mr. Burke, "like maids round a may-pole." In allusion to the chairing of Mr. Wilkes, he applied to it Horace's description of Pindar's numbers, "*Fertur numeris lege solutis*," altering the second word to *humeris*; *he (Wilkes) is carried on shoulders uncontrolled by law*. Conversing with a young gentleman from Ireland of better birth and capacity than fortune, who was venting his indignation against the purse-proud arrogance of some Scotch trader who had, according to his account, made his money chiefly by dealing in *kelp*, and who in consequence of his wealth, looked down with affected superiority on *gentlemen* by birth and by accomplishments, "Aye," replied Burke, "he thinks

"Et genus et virtus nisi cum re vilior alga est."

A higher feature of his character than wit, was a fervent and unfeigned spirit of piety, cheerful but humble, unallied to any thing like fanaticism, and expressive of deep dependence on the dispensations of Providence, traces of which are to be found in the letters of his boyhood. He had been early taught, as he publicly mentioned, to study the sacred volume with reverence, and thence an intimate acquaintance with its lessons and phraseology rested on his mind, and may be seen in his subsequent writings and speeches, some-

times to a fault. In that great trial of fortitude, the loss of his son, the most affecting lamentations are accompanied by confessions of his weakness, the vanity of his desires, and whatever he might wish or think to the contrary, the superior wisdom of the Divine decree in disposing of him as he thought proper. He preferred the Church of England to all others, as on the whole the most pure and estimable. Like Johnson, he viewed Roman Catholics with more favour than others were inclined to show, and latterly much more than at an earlier period. Proceeding still further than him, he professed strong regard for dissenters, from which if he ever swerved for a moment it was in the alarming situation of the country in 1792, when the leaders of that body sunk the character of ministers of religion in that of a violent and questionable order of politicians.

His moral character stood unimpeached by anything that approached to vice. "The unspotted innocence, the firm integrity of Burke," said Dr. Parr, "want no emblazoning, and if he is accustomed to exact a rigorous account of the moral conduct of others (*in public matters*), it is justified in one who shuns not the most inquisitorial scrutiny into his own." Unlike a few of his greatest contemporaries, he made neither the bottle nor the dice his household deities. He had no taste for pursuits that kill time rather than pass it. "I have no time," said he, "to be idle." In the country, the mornings often at an early hour, were devoted to agricultural pursuits, with a zeal and intelligence which soon enabled him to assume and deserve the name of a practical farmer. In town they were usually appropriated to study, literary composition, or political business, bending his way in the afternoon to the House of Commons, whence he returned on the termination of business, sometimes to literary society, more frequently fatigued and occasionally fretted, to the soothing comforts of his own fireside. "No wonder" said he, jocularly, on some occasions, "that my friend Charles (Fox) is so often more vigorous than I in the House; for when I call upon him in my way thither, jaded by the occupations of the day, there he is just out of bed, breakfasting at three o'clock, fresh and unexhausted for the contentions of the evening."

The same affectionate disposition which Shackleton remarked in the boy, continued through life in the domestic

relations of the man. His duties there might be said in a peculiar degree, to be his pleasures; and one of the best proofs of it was the cordial attachment and unanimity prevailing in a large family connexion, of which he formed the centre. He never forgot an old friend or an obligation, often lamenting that his short tenure of power precluded the possibility of giving them, as he could have wished, substantial proofs of his regard. His philanthropy, which frequently drew praises from his political antagonists, was often appealed to by numerous begging letters, sometimes requiring a large portion of the morning to peruse and to answer; and his exertions for some of the superior class of applicants, such as literary men and others, were occasionally repaid with gross ingratitude. His hospitality was always greater than his means, and at no time did he appear to more advantage than when doing the honours of his house and table.

The Poet Crabbe, who profited so largely by his active friendship, adds his testimony to that of many others—"Of his private worth, of his wishes to do good; of his affability and condescension; his readiness to lend assistance where he knew it was wanted; and his delight to give praise where he thought it was deserved." "All know," continues he, "that his powers were vast, his acquirements various, and I take leave to add, that he applied them with unremitting attention to those objects which he believed tended to the honour and welfare of his country; but it may not be so generally understood that he was very assiduous in the more private duties of a benevolent nature; that he delighted in giving encouragement to any promise of ability, and assistance to any appearance of desert. To what purposes he employed his pen, and with what eloquence he spake in the senate will be told by many, who yet may be ignorant of the solid instruction as well as the fascinating pleasantry found in his common conversation among his friends; and his affectionate manners, amiable disposition, and zeal for their happiness, which he manifested in the hours of retirement with his family."

Partaking of the warm temperament of his country, such resentments as were felt were promptly expressed; yet the instances were few, and but momentary. During a long and tempestuous public life, esteem was often won from opponents; nor is it remembered that he was engaged in any

personal squabble, excepting when Wedderburne made him an apology. It has been said, though untruly, that he bore ill-will toward Mr. Fox after their quarrel. So far is this from being the case, that though freely condemning his politics, he spoke of him otherwise among private friends with affection, saying, "he was a man made to be loved; there was not a particle of gall in his composition." It has been shown that a dangerous and obnoxious public course in his view alone prevented a renewal of as cordial a friendship as had ever existed between them. He valued himself, he said, for the regard that gentleman had once professed for him, and felt proportional regret on its cessation.

It is true, that he occasionally gave way to sudden starts of irritability, but these were transient—scarcely exhibited before they were subdued. A single instance of this kind occurring in public is commonly sufficient to fix the charge perpetually on him who displays it. Such was the case with Burke. Stories are therefore told of him wholly untrue, and those that possess a shade of truth are exaggerated. Such is the following, which occasionally finds a place in magazines and newspapers, and may be taken as a sample of the class, and amuse the lovers of anecdote.

"The irritability of Burke is well known, and was strongly exemplified on many occasions in Hastings's impeachment, in his conduct not only towards his opponents, but also towards his colleagues. On one occasion, Mr. Michael Angelo Taylor had nearly fallen a victim to this infirmity. Burke had put a question, the only one, it is said, which he had ever put that was unexceptionable both in substance and in form. Mr. Law, the late Lord Ellenborough, one of Hastings's counsel, objected to it, and was stating the grounds of his objection, when perceiving Mr. M. A. Taylor entering the manager's box, he congratulated the House that the candour and legal experience of the learned manager, meaning Mr. Taylor, would at once induce him to admit that such a question could not be put consistently with those rules of evidence with which his learned friend was so eminently conversant. Upon which, Mr. Taylor, who had never before been so respectfully referred to as an authority, (and who was worked upon like the crow in the fable, complimented on his singing), coming forward, requested the learned counsel to restate the question, which Mr. Law

having done, Mr. T. instantly observed that it was impossible to contend that it was admissible. On this, Mr. Burke, forgetting every thing but his question, seized Mr. Taylor by the collar, exclaiming, 'You little villain! put him in irons, put him in irons!' dragged him down, and had almost succeeded in throttling him, when Mr. Fox came to his rescue. The scene is by no one more pleasantly described than by Mr. Michael Angelo Taylor himself."

Not the least of his merits was in being so free from jealousy of contemporary talent, as often to surrender to others during the first sixteen years of Parliamentary life, the reputation of constitutional measures which he not only suggested, but chiefly achieved. The Nullum Tempus act, the Jury bill, the first relief to the Roman Catholics, and many others, were of this class. It may appear, and no doubt is, a very unusual effort of generosity, that any public man who had to work up-hill every step of his way to eminence, should do this to a certain degree in his own wrong, by bestowing upon others that which was calculated to ensure to himself honest and undisputed fame. The fact was he always looked to the success of his party, while too many *others* regarded that which was chiefly personal to themselves. He alludes with evident satisfaction, to this liberality of spirit in the retrospect of his political career contained in the Letter to a Noble Lord. In speaking of the popularity and lead he had acquired in the troubled period, from 1780 to 1782, "when wild and savage insurrection quitted the woods, and prowled about our streets in the name of reform;" he says—

"I know well enough how equivocal a test this kind of popular opinion forms of the merit that obtained it. I am no stranger to the insecurity of its tenure. I do not boast of it. It is mentioned to show, not how highly I prize the thing, but my right to value the use I made of it. I endeavoured to turn that short lived advantage to myself into a permanent benefit to my country. Far am I from detracting from the merit of some gentlemen, out of office, or in it, on that occasion. No!—It is not my wish to refuse a full and heaped measure of justice to the aids that I receive. I have, through life, been willing to give every thing to others, and to reserve nothing for myself, but the inward conscience that I had omitted no pains to discover,

to animate, to discipline, to direct the abilities of the country for its service and to place them in the best light to improve their age, or to adorn it ;—this conscience I have. I have never suppressed any man ; never checked him for a moment in his course by any jealousy, or by any policy. I was always ready to the height of my means, (and they were always infinitely below my desires) to forward those abilities which overpowered my own ;—he is an ill-furnished undertaker who has no machinery but his own hands to work with." The allusions here to Mr. Fox, are obvious. And to such discipline, teaching, and prompting of that popular man, there is no question but he owed much of his fame. He himself had the candour as we know, to acknowledge on four different occasions in the House of Commons, that to these he owed nearly it all.

One of the defects of Burke approached so near to what is often a virtue, that we find it sometimes difficult to draw the line between them. It was that heat, or ardour of temperament, which by meeting with much opposition in pursuing a measure that he had once satisfied himself was right, sometimes became zeal, sometimes irritability, sometimes obstinacy, sometimes passion, in its support. "Exquisite powers," writes Lord Buchan, in a letter to Bonomi, the artist, in allusion to this characteristic of the Irish orator, "has its root in exquisite sensibility." And this peculiar sensitiveness of genius has been so often noted as one of its marked features, that perhaps we are scarcely at liberty to lament what appears to possess some occult connexion with its excellence. Frequent observation assures us that some of the strongest minds are under the dominion of very powerful feelings and passions, and by the stimulus which these supply to the reason, enable it to accomplish much which minds equally great, without such strong excitements, would be unable or unwilling to attempt. Thus, the mild spirit of Melancthon could not perhaps have done the work of Luther, Calvin, or Knox. Thus, Mr. Fox alone, or Mr. Pitt in all probability, could not have excited the public mind on the American war as Mr. Burke by the variety of his powers and passions excited it. It is almost certain that they could never have overcome the unpopularity of the trial of Hastings, as was done at least for a time by him. It is unquestionable that it was not within the range of the powers of either or of both to in-

fluence the nation as he influenced it on the question of the French Revolution. Men constituted as he was, uniting extraordinary acquirements with invincible zeal, perseverance, and genius, are peculiarly cut out by nature for important and trying exigencies. He has a remark himself in the letter without his name written to Barry on his pictures in the Society of Arts to the effect that "a vigorous mind is as necessarily accompanied with violent passions as a great fire with great heat." "Strong passion," said he, at another time, and the observation displays much knowledge of character, "under the direction of a feeble reason feeds a low fever, which serves only to destroy the body that entertains it. But vehement passion does not always indicate an infirm judgment. It often accompanies, and actuates, and is even auxiliary to a powerful understanding; and when they both conspire and act harmoniously, their force is great to destroy disorder within and to repel injury from abroad." "No revolution (in public sentiment), civil or religious," says Sir Gilbert Elliot, writing in 1751 to the historian Robertson, "can be accomplished without that degree of ardour and passion which in a later age will be matter of ridicule to men who do not feel the occasion, and enter into the spirit of the times."

Useful as this peculiar frame of mind is—and few great things have been accomplished without it—the effect is sometimes prejudicial when carried into the discussion of ordinary affairs, fitted for ordinary men, in the House of Commons, as he himself occasionally experienced. It sometimes led him to express undue warmth and positiveness in matters of inferior moment; and by seeming to master his temper was also believed by those who did not know him well, to interfere with the due exercise of his judgment. To some who neither saw so far nor so clearly into the tendency of measures as himself, it had the appearance of arrogance; to some, of dictation, of obstinacy, or intractability. It gave rise not unfrequently to illiberal surmises that he must have some personal interest in matters which he urged with so much heat and pertinacity; and impaired the effect of his eloquence on the opposite benches of the body whom he had to address, by an opinion however unfounded, that his views at times sprang from momentary passion or impulse rather than from mature deliberation.

"Are you so little conversant with my father?" writes the younger Burke in 1790 to Philip Francis, "as to feel no deference for his judgment, or to mistake the warmth of his manner for the heat of his mind?" Convinced by diligent thought of being right, he was somewhat impatient of not being able to convince others by the same process. He did not perhaps make sufficient allowance for inferior understandings, duller apprehensions, more defective information; or always consider that as even moral truths are sometimes of slow progress among mankind, so political truth as involving another class of interests is received with still more caution from those who happen not to possess political power, and who are therefore suspected of aiming only to acquire it. He was early informed of this peculiarity in his public temperament, and expresses an intention to amend it so far back as 1777. The passage, which is remarkable for advising Mr. Fox to beware of the same error, is contained in the letter written to him in Ireland—"I remember some years ago, when I was pressing some points with great eagerness and anxiety, and complaining with great vexation to the Duke of Richmond of the little progress I made, he told me kindly, and I believe very truly, that though he was far from thinking so himself, other people could not be persuaded I had not some latent private interest in pushing these matters, which I urged with an earnestness so extreme and so much approaching to passion. He was certainly in the right. I am thoroughly resolved to give both to myself and to my friends less vexation on these subjects than hitherto I have done:—much less indeed. If *you* should grow too earnest, you will be still more inexcusable than I was. Your having entered into affairs so much younger ought to make them too familiar to you to be the cause of much agitation." On another occasion he adverted in the House to this point of character—"an earnest and anxious perseverance of mind which with all its good and all its evil effects is moulded into my nature." In private life it was never offensive and rarely observable, except when employed in pushing the interests of his friends, or in the duties of humanity and charity.

In examining a few of his more marked features of mind, there will be found peculiarities almost contradictory in their nature; qualities which if not inconsistent with

each other have been so rarely conjoined in the same person as to be thought inconsistent. Some of the more striking are, a variety in his powers almost unbounded, brilliancy which enchains imagination, solidity which satisfies the judgment and a fancy singularly excursive in pursuit of striking and alluring figures, which thus brings the acquisitions of genius to the service of persuasion and truth, while to these may be added wisdom which when employed in the affairs of mankind was rigidly pinned down to the plain and straightforward, such as was founded only upon experience and practice. This is so unusual a combination of qualities that perhaps another instance is not to be found. He not merely excelled all his contemporaries in the number of his powers, but in the peculiar excellence belonging to each. We find him a tolerable poet even while a boy, a penetrating philosopher, an acute critic, a judicious historian when a very young man, a judge of the fine arts whose opinions even Reynolds valued, a political economist when the science was scarcely known in this country or known to very few, a statesman often pronounced one of the wisest that ever adorned our country, an orator second to none of any age, a writer of extraordinary powers on every subject, and on politics the very first for depth and eloquence; and in addition to these, possessed of a vast and multifarious store of general knowledge of which all who enjoyed his conversation, whether friend or opponent, have spoken in terms of admiration and surprise. Like the celebrated Berkeley bishop of Cloyne, whose philosophy regarding matter he had once set himself the task to refute, there was nothing useful of which he could be said to be ignorant.

The testimonies borne to these talents and acquirements during so many years by Dr. Johnson, a few of which have been repeated in this work and more are to be found in Boswell's amusing volumes, form of themselves a stamp of fame. Even while travelling in the Hebrides this favourite topic of the great moralist was not forgotten. "I do not," said he to Boswell, alluding to what he considered inferior minds who had acquired a lead they did not deserve in public affairs, "grudge Burke being the first man in the House of Commons, for he is the first man every where." Lord Thurlow, after many years of political bickering and whose judgment in consequence was not likely to be biassed by un-

due partiality, spoke a language not less strong, when in a private company where there was allusion to the comparative merits of the three great orators and statesmen of the age, he observed—"The name of Burke will be remembered with admiration, when those of Pitt and Fox will be comparatively forgotten." The celebrated Mirabeau was known to speak of him more than once with great applause, and what was more singular, delivered in the National Assembly on several occasions large passages, with some trivial alterations from the printed speeches and writings of Burke, as his own. On being reproached with this once, he admitted the fact, apologising for it by saying that he had not had time to arrange his own thoughts on some of the many topics he was obliged to discuss, and that in no other productions could he find such an union of argument and eloquence.

As coming from the pen of the scarcely less celebrated opponent of Mirabeau, the following possesses much interest, written just after his decease; it was at first attributed to Peltier, but was really written by M. Cazalés; "Died at his house at Beaconsfield, with that simple dignity, that unostentatious magnanimity so consonant to the tenour of his life and actions, the Right Honourable Edmund Burke. There never was a more beautiful alliance between virtue and talents. All his conceptions were grand, all his sentiments generous. The great leading trait of his character, and that which gave it all its energy and its colour, was that strong hatred of vice which is no other than the passionate love of virtue. It breathes in all his writings; it was the guide of all his actions. But even the force of *his* eloquence was insufficient to transfuse it into the weaker or perverted minds of his contemporaries. This has caused much of the miseries of Europe; this has rendered of no effect towards her salvation the sublimest talents, the greatest and rarest virtues that the beneficence of Providence ever concentrated in a single character for the benefit of mankind. But Mr. Burke was too superior to the age in which he lived. His prophetic genius only astonished the nation which it ought to have governed." Mr. Windham, a devoted friend and admirer, often expressed similar sentiments, and in the same spirit as the concluding sentence of the preceding passage, wrote in a private letter about this time, what as a Minister it would not perhaps have been quite so decorous towards

his colleagues to say in public. "I do not reckon it amongst the least calamities of the times, certainly not among those that affect me least, that the world has now lost Mr. Burke. Oh! how much may we rue that his counsels were not followed! Oh! how exactly do we see verified all that he has predicted."

On the first allusion to the French Revolution in 1790, Mr. Fox said that "his reverence for the judgment of his right honourable friend was unfeigned; for that if he were to put all the political information he had gained from books, all that he had learned from science, and all that the knowledge of the world and its affairs had taught him, into one great scale, and the improvement he had derived from the conversation and instruction of his right honourable friend in the other, the latter would preponderate." Some time afterwards he repeated that "from him he had learned nearly all his political knowledge." At the moment of their disunion he observed, "that however they might differ on present matters, he must still look to his honourable friend as his master;" adding upon the same occasion, "He must again repeat that all he ever knew of men, that all he ever read in books, that all his reasoning faculties informed him of, or his fancy suggested to him, did not impart that exalted knowledge, that superior information, which he had acquired from the lessons of his right honourable friend. To him he owed all his fame, if fame he had any. And if he (Mr. Fox) should now or at any time prevail over him in discussion, he could acknowledge his gratitude for the capability and pride of the conquest in telling him—

Hoc ipsum quod vincit id est tuum.' "

At the moment of proposing his interment in Westminster Abbey, he again repeated the same acknowledgments in terms which, in the words of a Member in attendance, "drew tears from every one present who had any feelings at all, or could sympathize in the excellence of the great genius then before them, or with the still greater excellence of the genius who had departed."

When some one expressed an opinion that Burke was sometimes only a sophist, though an extraordinarily eloquent one, Mr. Fox is said to have immediately remarked, that he entertained a very different opinion. "The eloquence of

Mr. Burke," continued he, "is not the greatest of his powers: it is often a veil over his wisdom: moderate his more vehement sallies, lower his language, withdraw his imagery, and you will find that he is more wise than eloquent: you will have your full weight of the metal, though you should melt down the chasing."—"Burke," said Mr. Gerard Hamilton (whom Mr. Grattan pronounced a great judge of men and things), at the period of their greatest coolness, "understands every thing but gaming and music. In the House of Commons I sometimes think him only the second man in England; out of it he is always the first." The unknown author of the 'Pursuits of Literature,' who seems to have no other point of agreement with Dr. Parr, agrees with him at least in rapturous eulogy of Burke, scattered through a variety of passages of his work, in verse and in prose, in Greek, in Latin, in English, and all of them in no ordinary terms, 'First in the East,' 'Regent of Day,' 'Luminary of Europe,' 'great and unequalled man,' "who opened the eyes of the whole nation to the systems of internal destruction and irreversible misery which awaited it, and who only displayed them to confound and wither them by his powers," applying to him the praise of Paterculus to Cicero—

"Animo vidit, ingenio complexus est, eloquentia illuminavit."

"Let me," says Dr. Parr, "speak what my mind prompts of the eloquence of Burke—of Burke, by whose sweetness Athens herself would have been soothed, with whose amplitude and exuberance she would have been enraptured, and on whose lips that prolific mother of genius and science would have adored, confessed, the Goddess of Persuasion." "Who is there," adds the same learned critic, "among men of eloquence or learning more profoundly versed in every branch of science? Who is there that has cultivated philosophy, the parent of all that is illustrious in literature, or exploit, with more felicitous success? Who is there that can transfer so happily the result of laborious and intricate research to the most familiar and popular topics? Who is there that possesses so extensive yet so accurate an acquaintance with every transaction recent or remote? Who is there that can deviate from his subject for the purposes of delight with such engaging ease, and insensibly conduct his

readers from the severity of reasoning to the festivity of wit? Who is there that can melt them if the occasion requires with such resistless power to grief or pity? Who is there that combines the charm of inimitable grace and urbanity with such magnificent and boundless expansion?" Mr. Curwen, whose political opinions have been already noticed, thus writes of him on viewing Ballitore, the scene of his early acquisitions in knowledge. "The admiration, nay astonishment, with which I so often listened to Mr. Burke gave an interest to every spot connected with his memory, and forcibly brought to my recollection the profundity and extent of his knowledge, while the energy, warmth, and beauty of his imagery captured the heart, and made the judgment tributary to his will. As an orator he surpassed all his contemporaries, and was perhaps never exceeded."

Another Parliamentary contemporary and supporter previous to the French Revolution, but who was so incurably bitten by that event that he never recovered a sober understanding, acknowledges amidst several gross misrepresentations, "The political knowledge of Mr. Burke might be considered almost as an Encyclopædia; every man who approached him received instruction from his stores." "Learning," writes a contemporary of a different stamp, but who nevertheless never voted with him except during the period of the coalition Ministry, "waited upon him like a hand-maid, presenting to his choice all that antiquity had culled or invented; he often seemed to be oppressed under the load and variety of his intellectual treasures. Every power of oratory was wielded by him in turn; for he could be during the same evening pathetic and humorous, acrimonious and conciliating; now giving a loose to his indignation and severity; and then almost in the same breath calling to his assistance ridicule, wit, and mockery." "As an orator," adds another adversary on the question of revolutionary politics, "notwithstanding some defects, he stands almost unrivalled. No man was better calculated to arouse the dormant passions, to call forth the glowing affections of the human heart, and to 'harrow up' the inmost recesses of the soul. Venality and meanness stood appalled in his presence; he who was dead to the feelings of his own conscience was still alive to his animated reproaches; and

corruption for a while became alarmed at the terrors of his countenance. Had he died during the meridian of his fame and character he could scarcely have been considered second to any man either of ancient or modern times." The *meridian of his fame and character* means, in this writer's estimate, before he assailed the French Revolution, and persons of similar sentiments speak the same language; but the rest of the world who think differently and more justly, deem his exertions upon that subject the climax of his reputation and powers.

Wordsworth (Moore's Memoirs, vol. iii.) speaking of Fox, Canning, and other eminent public men, remarked how little they knew, or could study of poetry—"Mr. Burke alone was an exception to this description of public men; by far the greatest man of his age; not only abounding in knowledge himself, but feeding in various directions, his most able contemporaries; assisting Adam Smith in his 'Political Economy,' and Reynolds in his 'Lectures on Painting,' Fox, too, who acknowledged that all he had ever learned from books was nothing to what he had derived from Burke."

"His learning is so various and extensive," said the Rev. Thomas Campbell, author of the History of Ireland, "that we might praise it for its range and compass were it not still more praiseworthy for its solidity and depth. His imagination is so lively and so creative that he may justly be called the child of fancy; and therefore his enemies, for even he is not without them, would persuade us that his fancy overbears his judgment. Whereas this fine frenzy is, as it ought to be, only a secondary ingredient in the high composition of a man who not only reflects honour on his native country, but elevates the dignity of human nature. In his most eccentric flights, in his most seemingly wild excursions, in the most boisterous tempest of his passion, there is always a guardian angel which rides in the whirlwind, and directs the storm. His grand characteristic is genius, and ruling faculty is judgment, though certainly not of that cold kind which the law would call prudence; but his reason is enlightened by intuition, and whilst he persuades as an orator, he instructs as a philosopher. A nobleman of the highest station and abilities in England, though of an opposite party in politics, when he heard the petty minions of the day decry

his powers, stopped them short, and said, 'Come, come, hold your tongue; the next age could not know that there was oratory in this, if Edmund Burke had not printed his speeches.' And Dr. Johnson, a niggard in panegyric to others, speaking of that parity of talents which is generally distributed to the sons of men, has been heard to say, that during his acquaintance with life he knew but two men who had risen considerably above the common standard; the one was Lord Chatham, the other was Edmund Burke."

"His eloquence," said Mr. Wilberforce on another occasion—and it was rarely their lot to agree on political matters—"had always attracted, his imagination continually charmed, his reasonings often convinced him. Of his head and of his heart, of his abilities and of his humanity, of his rectitude and of his perseverance, no man could entertain a higher opinion than he did." A critic of considerable repute thus indirectly alludes to the oratory of Mr. Burke, in analysing that of Mr. Grattan. "It is not the roundness, the *ore rotundo* of Mr. Pitt; it is not the simple majesty of Mr. Fox; it is not the brilliancy of Mr. Sheridan. Occasionally we caught a tint, a feature of resemblance to Mr. Burke, but he has not that commanding figure and manner, that volume of voice, that superabundant richness and fertility of fancy, that vast grasp and range of mind which Mr. Burke possessed beyond all other created beings." Grattan himself writes to Ireland, December 8, 1769—"Burke is unquestionably the first orator among the Commons of England; boundless in knowledge, instantaneous in his apprehensions, and abundant in his language. He speaks with profound attention and acknowledged superiority, notwithstanding the want of energy, the want of grace, and the want of elegance in his manner."

To these might be added dozens of similar eulogies of his character and powers from inferior men. Language indeed has been exhausted in characterizing them; and the term, "a vast storehouse of knowledge," "an illustrious man," "a wonderful man," "an unequalled man;" "a mighty man," "an all-knowing mind," "a boundless mind," "an exhaustless mind," "the most consummate orator of the age," "the greatest orator and wisest statesman of modern times," occur to the reader of nearly every work, untainted by party spirit, in which he is mentioned. Lord John Rus-

sell however does not seem disposed to allow him a virtue which on several public occasions he claimed. Speaking of the conviction of their own merits entertained by Horace, Ovid, Dante, Milton, Ariosto, and others, he says (in *Memoirs of Fox*) "they knew their own powers, and were too honest to affect ignorance of them. But when Mr. Burke who must have been conscious that his eloquence was stamped with genius, and fraught with the treasures of a rich imagination, represents himself as nothing more than an industrious plodding Member of Parliament, I cannot fail to perceive that he is mocking his hearers, and that he pretends to a humility he does not feel."

Among the notices of his characters should not be omitted that which proceeds from the most accurate and intimate source. Dr. F. Laurence, after mentioning his death some time in the night of July 8, 1797, says—"His end was suited to the simple greatness of mind which he displayed through life, every way unaffected, without levity, without ostentation, full of natural grace and dignity; he appeared neither to wish nor to dread, but patiently and placidly to await the hour of his dissolution. He had been listening to some *Essays of Addison's*, in which he ever took delight; he had recommended himself, in many affectionate messages, to the remembrance of those absent friends whom he had never ceased to love; he had conversed some time with his accustomed force of thought and expression on the awful situation of his country, for the welfare of which his heart was interested to the very last beat; he had given with steady composure some private directions, in contemplation of his approaching death; when, as his attendants were conveying him to his bed, he sunk down, and, after a short struggle, passed quietly, and without a groan to eternal rest, in that mercy which he had just declared he had long sought with unfeigned humiliation, and to which he looked with a trembling hope!

"Of his talents and acquirements in general, it is unnecessary to speak. They were long the glory of his country, and the admiration of Europe; they might have been (had it so consisted with the inscrutable counsels of divine Providence!) the salvation of both. If not the most accomplished orator, yet the most eloquent man of his age; perhaps second to none in any age; he had still more wisdom

than eloquence. He diligently collected it from the wise of all times; but what he had so obtained he enriched from the vast treasury of his own observation; and his intellect, active, vigorous, comprehensive, trained in the discipline of true philosophy to whatever subject he applied it, penetrated at once through the surface into the essential forms of things. With a fancy singularly vivid, he least of all men, in his time, indulged in splendid theories. With more ample materials of every kind than any of his contemporaries, he was the least in his own skill to innovate. A statesman of the most enlarged views—in all his policy he was strictly practical; and in his practice he always regarded, with holy reverence, the institutions and manners derived from our ancestors. It seemed as if he had been endowed with such transcendent powers, and informed with such extensive knowledge, only to bear the more striking testimony, in these days of rash presumption, how much the greatest mind is singly inferior to the accumulated efforts of innumerable minds in the long flow of centuries. His private conversation had the same tincture with his public eloquence. He sometimes adorned and dignified it with philosophy, but he never lost the charm of natural ease. There was no subject so trivial which he did not transiently illuminate with the brilliancy of his imagination. In writing, in speaking, in the senate, or round the table, it was easy to trace the operations of the same genius.

“To the Protestant religion, as by law established, he was attached from sincere conviction; nor was his a barren belief, without influence on his moral conduct. He was rigid in the system of duties by which he regulated his own actions; liberal in construing those of other men; warm, but placable; resenting more the offences committed against those who were dear to him, than against himself; vehement and indignant only where he thought public justice insulted; compassionate to private distress; lenient to suffering guilt. As a friend, he was, perhaps, too partial to those he esteemed; over-rating every little merit, or overlooking all their defects; indefatigable in serving them; straining in their favour whatever influence he possessed; and for their sakes more than his own, regretting that during so long a political life he had so seldom bore any share in power, which he considered only as an instrument of more diffusive good.

In his domestic relations he was worthy, and more than worthy he could not be, of the eminent felicity which for many years he enjoyed; a husband of exemplary tenderness and fidelity; a father fond to excess; the most affectionate of brothers; the kindest master; and, on his part, he has often been heard to declare, that in the most anxious moments of his public life, every care vanished when he entered his own roof. One, who long and intimately knew him, to divert his own sorrow, has paid this very inadequate tribute to his memory. Nothing which relates to such a man can be uninteresting or unimportant to the public, to whom he truly belonged. Few indeed whom the divine goodness has largely gifted, are capable of profiting by the imitation of his genius and learning; but all mankind may grow better by the study of his virtues."

Much of this praise came from those who knew him not merely in the bustle of political life, but in moments when the statesman was sunk in the social acquaintance. This is the more valuable species of testimony, as it sometimes happens that a nearer view of public men diminishes much of that admiration or wonder we feel at a distance. With him familiarity appears to have increased it. His more private friends, who happened to be little or not at all connected with public affairs, and who had the best possible opportunities of probing and exploring the man, loved him the best and prized him the most. The same feeling existed among his relatives. No man, it has been said, is a hero to his valet-de-chambre; and from the same feeling of familiarity few men perhaps however great in the estimation of the world, carry the same impressions of greatness into the bosoms of their own families. Yet even there, where most unveiled and unreserved, he had the fortune to secure both profound attachment and respect; and the following anecdote proves that he contrived to belie the proverb just quoted. When some one was congratulating his old servant Webster on the honour of serving so good a master and so great a man — "Yes, Sir," said the faithful attendant, "he is a great man; he knows and does every thing but what is mean, or little." Mr. Windham used to say that this was one of the finest panegyrics upon him which could be uttered.

Richard his brother, and William Burke, his companions from youth, the partakers of his fortunes, the participators

in many of his studies, who knew if any men could know, the value of his mind and the labours bestowed upon its culture, looked up to him with a feeling of *veneration*.⁴ Sentiments of this kind frequently appear in the letters of both. At an early period of his public life Richard, writing to Shackleton as we have seen in a previous page (105) passes a high eulogium on him on public grounds. William Burke, writing about the same time, speaks the same language. Though no relation of Edmund, this gentleman was so much attached to him from boyhood, and so proud of the connexion, that, in the language of a friend of the family, "he would have knocked any man down who had dared to dispute the relationship." The respectful admiration of his son equalled that of his brother and friend. During the last visit to Ireland in 1786, when Mr. Shackleton, after listening attentively to some ingenious and profound observations of the father, turned aside soon afterwards with the son and remarked in conversation, "He is the greatest man of the age:" "He is," replied the son, with filial enthusiasm, and a very near approximation to the truth, "the greatest man of any age." This estimate is not therefore, as many of the preceding testimonies imply, merely that of filial admiration. A greater and more experienced name indulges in nearly the same language, repeating what most writers say when touching upon the topics which he had occasion to handle. Sir James Mackintosh writes—"Burke was one of the first thinkers as well as one of the greatest orators of his time. He is without parallel in any age, excepting perhaps Lord Bacon and Cicero; and his works contain an ampler store of political and moral wisdom than can be found in any other writer whatever."

"No one can doubt," says Lord Brougham, "that enlightened men in all ages will hang over the works of Mr. Burke. He was a writer of the first class, and excelled in almost every species of prose composition. The extraordinary depth of his detached views, the penetrating sagacity which he occasionally applies to men and their motives, and the curious felicity of expression with which he unfolds principles and traces resemblances and relations, are separately the gift of few, and in their union probably without any example."

Nothing perhaps more strongly exhibits the homage paid to great talents united to moral qualities than the influence

he acquired over the most eminent men with whom political connexion brought him into contact. The preceding pages furnish ample evidence of this power; such for instance as the Marquis of Rockingham, a man of sound talents unquestionably, the Duke of Richmond, Admiral Keppel, Sir George Savile, Mr. Dowdeswell, and all the ablest of that party; the Duke of Portland, Mr. Fox, Mr. Windham, all his private friends without exception; the most distinguished of the Whig party, several of the coalition Ministry;—in some degree over Mr. Pitt and his colleagues in 1792, at least as much as the habitual pride, and jealousy of all political talents entertained by the minister would permit; numberless others who might be mentioned; and on nearly all the great questions he embraced, eventually over the whole nation. If it require a pretty strong understanding to gain leading influence over even the ignorant and the weak, what must that be which subjects to its dominion the enlightened and the powerful, and in talents not merely the great but the vast?

CHAPTER XVII.

His eloquence—His writings—His leading principles as a Statesman—Mr. Burke, Mr. Pitt, and Mr. Fox.

CRITICS of the classical ages accustomed frequently to witness the powerful influences of good public speaking in popular assemblies, have endeavoured to impress upon us a high idea of the requisites of a great orator. His moral character should be pure, his knowledge universal, with a genius fitted to animate and adorn that knowledge; his language flowing, his delivery impressive, his powers of reasoning and imagination strong, added to such perfect possession of himself as to be in readiness to combine these qualities, or to draw upon each separately according to the exigencies of the moment. These constitute a rare combination such as our imperfect humanity can scarcely exhibit; but beyond all question no one in the history of English oratory approaches so near to this character as Burke. With some truth it has been said that his powers if shared out, would have made

half a dozen of good orators. And we must regard him at least as a remarkable instance of one who approached the ancient standard of perfection. Others of the great political names of our country possess only two or three of the qualities enumerated. Mr. Pitt and Mr. Fox for instance, equalled him in reasoning, in judgment on common affairs, and in fluency. Mr. Sheridan in coolness, promptitude, and wit. Lord Chatham had the superiority of a bold and overpowering delivery. Lord Bolingbroke, also perhaps in some degree, had the same advantage though we have little now on which to found an opinion. And Charles Townshend in addition to many popular requisites, possessed a peculiar parliamentary skill in seizing the favourable moment to push a subject, in the adaptation of his powers to the point at issue and to the temper of the House at the moment whatever temper that might be; but none possessed the combination peculiar to Burke. Neither had any of these eminent persons pretensions to his originality of thought, force of language, felicitous phraseology, or that inexhaustible fertility upon every topic which constitutes the soul of eloquence, and which when his opponents had little else to find fault with they urged against him as a defect. He would seem therefore to have been cut out for the character in which he figured, partly by large natural gifts, and partly by having grounded and reared himself upon the model which the Augustan age of literature recommends. And this must have been done at an early period of life; led to it probably not so much by sanguine hope of ever becoming the character which he admired, as by the expected duties of the profession he at first contemplated, or by that impulse which, without knowing precisely whither it tends, so often impels and guides us in the pursuits of life.

A distinction may be made and perhaps hold good, between a great orator and a debater. It has been said, that in the latter respect Mr. Fox acquired the superiority over all men. No speaker certainly was ever heard with more consideration by those opposed to him, or perhaps with so much partiality by those whom he led in the House of Commons, arising as well from unquestioned talents as strong attachment to his person, which few other political leaders have had the good fortune to secure, or to secure in the same degree. It will nevertheless be difficult to point out where Burke's

presumed inferiority lay. In information, in wisdom upon all great occasions, and in variety of talents to secure them a favourable reception from his hearers, he had no equal; in readiness and vigour no superior; and he was accused of being frequent and fertile to a fault.

After all it may be doubted whether this great reputed dexterity in debate, be any just criterion of the highest order of intellect, or whether the style which commonly accompanies it is of the highest style of oratory—that style which is not merely effective in the British Senate, but commands the admiration of all men of all countries as the perfection of the art. Judged by this standard Mr. Fox comes much short of Burke. A good debater, although a character almost wholly English, there being scarcely any such as we understand it among the ancients, and little resembling him in the rest of Europe at the present day, is more of a mechanic perhaps than he is willing to acknowledge. His range is commonly narrowed, his aim bounded by local or temporary circumstances, which though calculated to meet some minor interest or emergency, often become obstacles to wide expansion of mind. He may be said to move within the narrowest circle, to work in a species of political treadmill. His art has been attained as in the cases of Fox, Pitt and others—and it is but fair to calculate may be again acquired—at an age when other and much higher faculties remain still unfolded. A good debater therefore may be in great measure made. The power of a great and commanding orator in the highest acceptation of the term must, like that of the poet, be chiefly born with him.*

The oratorical style of Burke appears not only of a high order, but it possesses the first characteristic of genius—originality. We have nothing that is very similar, and little

* Since the first publication of this work the opinion of a great genius seems to corroborate that of the present writer.

Lord Byron has observed, that no parliamentary speaker of our own day gave him the idea of a great orator. Grattan, he said, was near to it. Fox he only regarded as a debater, and between such a character and a great orator there is no more resemblance, he adds, than between an *improvisatore*, or a versifier, and a great poet. Lord Chatham and Burke were, in his opinion, the only English orators who approached perfection.—If the contest for superiority lies between these two great men, it will be no difficult matter to decide to whom the preference will be given.

perhaps of equal character in our language, though of its nature and power, vigour and variety, novelty of thought and that intellectual brilliancy which flashes athwart every subject and transmutes all it meets with into auxiliaries to the main purpose, an inadequate idea can be conveyed by description, and no specimen can do it justice. When Johnson was asked whether Burke resembled Tullius Cicero? "No, Sir," was the reply, "he resembles Edmund Burke." Taken as a whole however, his manner partakes of the grandeur of the eloquent Roman, with more of richness, of variety of knowledge, of masculine energy, and altogether displays greater reach of mind; yet with less of chastity, of elaborate elegance, or of that methodical arrangement we have perhaps no right to expect in speeches which unlike those of the great ancient, were not polished into perfection before they were spoken. In detached passages he sometimes assumes an air of severity, and of that simpler dignity which belongs to Demosthenes, to whom, as an orator, he himself gave the preference.*

His eloquence will be found less remarkable for the predominance of any one faculty of mind, than for that distinguishing feature, a combination of them all. This peculiarity has so much confused the judgment of many, and not mean critics, as to give rise to contradictory opinions. Some represent him as addressing the passions and imagination more than the understanding; others of overwhelming his subject by pouring in argument more than enough. Some will have it that he deals in that bold, flowing, loose, yet

* A writer, already quoted, says of him—"Equal to that great man (Cicero) in dialectic, in imagery, in occasional splendour, and in general information;—excelling him in political wisdom, and the application of history and philosophy to politics he yields to him in pathos, in grace, in taste, and even in that which was not the forte of Cicero, discretion. * *

* * * What particularly distinguishes him from the Greek and Roman orators, and from his contemporary rivals, were the countless lessons of civil and moral wisdom by which he dignified his compositions, and both enforced and illustrated his arguments; his sudden transitions from the grand to the gay, from sublimity to pleasantry, from the refined and recondite to the ordinary and obvious; and his frequent admixture of coarse and low expressions even in his most splendid passages. The effect of those was sometimes great, but they deformed and disgusted. 'The Venus of Phidias,' Wilkes used to say, 'was so lovely, that the Athenians called her the Venus of Roses. Lovely, too, speaking generally, is the Venus of Burke; but she sometimes is the Venus of whisky.'

powerful style which they term licentious; others say he is often abrupt and severe. Some consider he is too fond of wit, ornament, and lighter matter; others see him too metaphysical and refined, and too much above the intellectual level of the assembly he addressed, though that assembly was the House of Commons. Such seems to have been in some measure the opinion of Goldsmith, who describes him as being doomed, in allusion to the fatigue and privations of debate,—“To eat mutton cold, and cut *blocks* with a razor.” Some again have honestly confessed, that after much meditation they can make nothing at all of him—that his qualities contradict each other, and that his powers and his mode of wielding them are equally indescribable.

All these opinions cannot be true. The confusion perhaps arises from each viewing him in the light which strikes most forcibly at the moment; from not attending so much to the conjoined effect of the whole of his argument as to single parts, each of which is so striking in itself as to appear a principal in the cause in which it is embodied only as an auxiliary. Examine any single oration he has published. Take that on American Taxation for instance, the first though perhaps not the best that he gave the world; and the pervading feeling in the mind of the reader after perusal, is a conviction of sound straight-forward sense, enlargement of mind, ingenious yet solid and honest views, moderation of tone, and acute discriminating wisdom in the speaker. Let him omit if he will, the graphic sketches of character should these be deemed extraneous or meretricious, and there is little to offend even fastidious taste. We find nothing which can be considered flowery—an accusation sometimes laid to his charge by confusion of language—for there is little approach to such quality in any of his speeches or writings; nothing merely amusing or ornamental; nothing which a plain understanding may not comprehend; nothing which merely solicits the imagination for a figure without that figure strikes hard and home in some form or other upon the argument. But there is a total of vigour and effect on the question at issue, as on any other that much engaged his attention, which no other modern orator imparts, and which the records of Parliament teach us no other has yet imparted. The great aim as to manner in this as in all his productions is strength—to make a deep if not indelible impression. If you do not agree with, he

is determined you shall not forget him ; so that his expressions often cling tenaciously to memory. To this he occasionally sacrifices the minor considerations of elegance or beauty of phrase. He approaches a contest not with two or three, but with that variety of qualities which may be compared to an armory of weapons ; and the skill with which they were used and the difficulty experienced by able opponents in meeting him fully on every point of attack, made him at all times a formidable assailant in Parliament—a kind of Briareus among political disputants.

To arrive at this result his mind possessed a peculiarly discursive faculty. Like a bird of prey upon the wing, it was ever on the watch for something on which to levy tribute. Few things therefore whether great or little, whether of nature or of art, whether belonging to earth or to a higher region, escape him. He darts upon them without materially impeding his course, or has the rarer art in most of his deviations, to carry his subject along with him. He seldom stops to select. He grasps at much which a severer judgment would reject ; but whatever is seized he has the art beyond any other man of putting to use ; and his progress often reminds us of a torrent, sweeping rock and tree and earth along with it, yet acquiring additional power even from the heterogeneous nature of its accumulations. In these generally speaking, there is little of common-place ; or when a common idea is used, it is dressed in so novel a garb that we sometimes do not immediately recognize an old acquaintance. His conceptions without violent straining, are almost always original. We meet with things in him which are to be found in no other quarter, which are wholly unexpected in themselves, and which perhaps scarcely any one ever before imagined, or at least thought of adapting to such purposes as he had in view. He has drilled more extraordinary and bold auxiliaries to the art of persuasion than any other orator ancient or modern ; and while their novel office creates surprise, we are at some loss to discover how they got into their new situations or by what dexterity they are made to play so conspicuous a part.

At times he seems on the verge of extravagance ; not indeed that species of it which excites laughter or contempt but rather astonishment. Along this dangerous precipice, dangerous in many respects to an ambitious orator or writer,

he treads in perfect security. Other and even eminent men, in attempting to pursue his track, have not been always able to preserve a secure footing, chiefly because they mistake the severe boldness of his occasionally figurative for a flowery manner, than which no two things can be more opposite. The former appears to be the offspring of stronger, the latter in general, of looser and weaker intellectual powers. Nothing is more peculiar to his impassioned style than this difficulty of imitation. To be convinced that such is the case, let any one take a page or two of our English classics, Addison or Johnson for instance, with the design of hitting off their chief characteristics, and he may probably make the resemblance respectable. Let him attempt the manner of Burke, and he will almost certainly fail; he will either overdo or underdo it. Even Sheridan with all his genius, who had his eye upon this great model in the early part of his career and in several speeches on the impeachment, soon found out that the endeavour was nearly hopeless and therefore gave it up.* It

* After the first edition of this work was published, Moore's *Life of Sheridan* appeared, and incidentally corroborates or follows nearly every one of the views which the present writer has taken of Burke in the points in which he differed from, or excelled, his contemporaries.—Thus it is said—

“His (Sheridan's) attempts, indeed, at the florid, or figurative style, whether in his speeches or his writings, were seldom very successful. That luxuriance of fancy which in Burke was natural and indigenous, was in him rather a forced and exotic growth. It is a remarkable proof of the difference between them, that while, in the memorandum of speeches left behind by Burke, we find that the points of argument or business were those which he prepared, trusting to the ever-ready wardrobe of his fancy for their adornment,—in Mr. Sheridan's notes it is chiefly the decorative passages that are worked up beforehand to their full polish; while on the resources of his good sense, ingenuity, and temper, he seems to have relied for the management of his reasonings and facts. Hence naturally it arises, that the images of Burke being called up on the instant, like spirits, to perform the bidding of his argument, minister to it throughout with an almost co-ordinate agency; while the figurative fancies of Sheridan, already prepared for the occasion, and brought forth to adorn, not assist the business of the discourse, resemble rather those sprites which the magicians used to keep enclosed in phials, to be produced for a momentary enchantment, and then shut up again.

“In truth, the similes and illustrations of Burke form such an intimate, and often essential part of his reasoning, that if the whole strength of the Samson does not lie in those luxuriant locks, it would at least be considerably diminished by their loss, whereas, in the speech of Mr. Sheridan (on the Begum charge) there is hardly one of the rhetorical ornaments

is quite true as Burke himself more than once experienced, that even his excellencies proved, or were represented to be, defects, and that the very number of his talents served as a handle to impair the effect he expected to produce. There is a large class of auditors to be found in the House of Commons as elsewhere, who think that an argument to be good must be dull, that wit in the course of it is misapplied, and that a flash of genius or flight of imagination becomes a species of death to the process of reasoning—an idea to which even Mr. Pitt, with characteristic dexterity was fond of giving countenance, when he had nothing better at hand to offer to the forcible, keen, and various powers of a gifted adversary.

We may admit that while performing the frequent duty of an Opposition leader—the necessity of making an eloquent speech out of little or nothing—he sometimes on lighter

that might not be detached without in any degree injuring the force of the general statement.

“Another consequence of this difference between them is observable in their respective modes of transition from what may be called *business* of a speech to its more generalized and rhetorical parts. When Sheridan rises his elevation is not sufficiently prepared; he starts abruptly and at once from the level of his statement, and sinks down into it again with the same suddenness. But Burke, whose imagination never allows even business to subside into mere prose, sustains a pitch throughout which accustoms the mind to wonder, and while it prepares us to accompany him in his boldest flights, makes us, even when he walks, still feel that he has wings:—

‘Même quand l’oiseau marche, on sent qu’il a des ailes.

“It is surely a most unjust disparagement of the eloquence of Burke, to apply to it any time of his life, the epithet ‘flowery’—a designation only applicable to that ordinary ambition of style, whose chief display by necessity consists of ornament without thought, and pomp without substance. A succession of images, clothed in simple transparent language, even when, as in Burke, they ‘crowd upon the aching sense’ too dazzlingly, should never be confounded with that mere verbal opulence of style, which mistakes the glare of words for the glitter of ideas, and like the Helen of the sculptor Lysippus, makes fiery supply the place of beauty.”

More recently, it would appear from Lord John Russell’s “Memorials of Fox” that an idea had latterly gained ground among the Whig party of Burke having endeavoured to imitate Sheridan. For this opinion we find no good foundation. There is nothing in Burke to warrant it—nothing as we see in Sheridan’s biographer to countenance it—nothing in their habits, tastes, and capacities, and latterly in their known dislikes, to render such an event at all probable. Had there been any obvious approach to it during the Impeachment, the assailants of Burke who spared him in nothing, would have made ample use of the fact to annoy him.

matters at least, delighted to play with his subject ; to wanton in the luxuriance of fancy, wit, and sarcasm ; to dally and amuse himself as well as others on the dull road it was so often necessary to travel by giving a species of jubilee to the animal spirits. But his power over the main question was as visible on these as on more serious occasions ; often was it termed the "wantonness of eloquence," and arose in fact from the consciousness of mental power. He reminds us of a horse-soldier in an engagement, exercising preliminary sabre-flourishes over the head of an enemy on foot previous to putting him to death. It would be hazardous to pronounce these or any other of his deviations misplaced, for some of the most skilful passages in oratory are those which occasionally glance from the immediate point to fix our attention on what is to follow. Homer is said to nod, and Burke may occasionally trifle, but both are probably the effects of design. Few subjects admit of continued excitement of mind for a length of time ; and few audiences relish for three or four hours together what is called a continued chain of reasoning. Rests are as useful and necessary in a long speech as in a long journey, and their judicious intermixture, as they occasion the least fatigue, are likely to impart the greater pleasure. "To have attained a relish for his (Mr. Burke's) charms," says Dr. Parr, "is greatly to have advanced in literature."

Certain peculiarities in his eloquence, as vividness of imagination, vehemence, force of invective, and that almost morbid sensitiveness of feeling which is sometimes of use to an orator to make his hearers feel, belong as much perhaps to his country as to the individual. Several of the more distinguished speakers of Ireland exhibit these peculiarities in the few specimens still preserved of their more animated contentions. English Parliamentary oratory so far as it is preserved, has little of this character. But specimens of older date are few and imperfect, so that little exists previous to the commencement of the late reign which gives a tolerable idea of the speeches, or style of speaking, of the greater names in our political annals. Even the supposed early effusions of Lord Chatham are known to derive their chief merit from the pen of Dr. Johnson, who wrote his and the other speeches given to us as parliamentary debates, sometimes from meagre hints, or from merely knowing which side of the argument the speakers had taken.

Statesmen then contended as if their eloquence was born to die with the debate of the day; to become extinguished and forgotten even on the spot which gave it birth; leaving to posterity no memorial of their noblest stand against an unconstitutional measure or Minister, but a record of the rejection of one, or dismissal from office of the other. It is also true what Burke somewhere observes, that debates a century ago were comparative parish-vestry discussions to what they afterwards became. This change according to the general belief of contemporaries, was in a considerable degree owing to himself. He is considered, by the enlarged views, the detailed expositions of policy, the intermixture of permanent truths bearing upon temporary facts, and the general lustre and air of wisdom which he was among the first to introduce at large into Parliamentary discussion, greatly to have exalted the character of Parliament itself; and by the display of his own characteristics, to have excited the emulation of others. No comparison at least can be drawn between the tone and value of Parliamentary eloquence previous to his appearance there, and since. He struggled likewise long and zealously ere the next great step in the improvement of parliamentary eloquence was obtained, namely, the publication of the debates. This event gave it at once excellence, permanence, and usefulness.

As an accuser, his power was terrific. Once under the influence of excited feelings, and possessed of a vocabulary unequalled for force and comprehensiveness, he exhausts the whole compass of the English language in fierceness of invective and bitterness of censure. Even Junius, with all the advantages of indiscriminate personality, private scandal, and the mask under which he fought, which last left him free in the use of terms of censure, has not exceeded him in severity, while he falls infinitely short in reach of thought, command of language, energy of expression, and variety of reproach. Junius is more pungent in accusation, Burke more powerful; Junius imparts the idea of keenness, Burke that of overpowering force; Junius of possessing powers to a certain degree circumscribed, Burke of a magnitude nearly boundless; Junius assaults his victim with a razor, Burke with a sledge-hammer; and repeats his blows so often and in so many different modes, that few can again recognize the carcass he has once taken it in hand to mangle.

Much of this wrathful spirit arose from what he thought tyranny or crime, where great public offences or supposed culprits were in question, and when he conceived it necessary to summon up every faculty he possessed, not merely to overpower but to destroy them. In reply to the attack of the Duke of Bedford, though he curbs much of his natural vehemence from the provocation being personal, there is great vigour, with something of a lofty contempt of his opponent. But no record of the exertions of one man in vehemence of censure or variety of reproach, in labour or in talents, equal those against the French Revolution and Mr. Hastings. In the latter case his speeches were heard with an awe approaching to terror; and though their severity has been censured, the best apologies, which perhaps can now be offered, were volunteered at the moment by two political adversaries, Mr. Pitt and Mr. Wilberforce.* Yet it must be remembered that he frequently denied having used the more offensive expressions and phrases put into his mouth by the idle or designing rumours of the day. It may likewise be believed that acerbity was sharpened by the conviction of all his vast labours on this subject being in vain. He early felt that the countenance of the Court, the lukewarmness of Ministry, the numbers and influence of men whom Hastings had enriched or favoured, and the quibbles or technicalities of the law of evidence, would render conviction even of the accused agents, such as Sir Elijah Impey, nearly impossible. In addition to former passages stating this belief, the following appears in a private letter to Shackleton, inviting him to come to him after a busy day, May 9th, 1788 :

* The latter, in an animated address, said, he did not wonder at the mind of Mr. Burke being warmed, and his feelings excited, by the nature of the supposed crimes of the accused; for he was aware of the transactions in India before almost any one else; he had been brooding over them for years; and it was natural for him to see their enormity in a magnified point of view. Mr. Pitt (9th May, 1787,) "admitted that he was once of opinion that the language of *those who chiefly promoted the present proceeding* was too full of acerbity, and much too passionate and exaggerated; but when he found what the nature of the crimes was, and how strong the presumption that the allegations were true, he confessed that he could not expect that gentlemen, when reciting what they thought actions of treachery, actions of violence and oppression, and demanding an investigation into those actions, should speak a language different from that which would naturally arise from the contemplation of such actions."

—“We have an Indian law fox to hunt, but he will earth in strong ministerial and professional party ground, and we shall not be able to dig him out.”

In the more mechanical part of oratory—delivery, his manner was less graceful than powerful, his enunciation distinct and unchecked by any embarrassment, his periods flowing and harmonious, his language always forcible, sometimes choice, sometimes when strongly excited acrimonious or sarcastic; his epithets numerous, occasionally coarse; and to the last he retained much of the Irish accent, which in general opinion marred the power of his eloquence. At times his gesticulation was violent, his tone harsh, and an habitual, undulating motion of the head, alluded to in the lines quoted from Sinkin's Letters, had the appearance of indicating something of a self-confident or intractable spirit. He seemed disposed, to casual observers, to wish to command fully as much as to persuade the auditors of the opposite benches, and the effect proved occasionally disadvantageous to his views. Lord Chatham has been called a great actor, and therefore excelled him in delivery.

The writer of the notice of him already quoted (p. 170), thus says of his mind and manner in 1777:—“This sketch we present to our readers as a very imperfect attempt to delineate the uncommon parliamentary abilities of this great political genius. We cannot, however, dismiss this side of the picture without observing that his abilities are accompanied with a very extraordinary instance of an union of talents scarcely compatible; for it is difficult to decide whether he speaks or writes better, or whether he deliberates with greater judgment, or plans and directs with greater aptitude, sagacity, or foresight. On the other hand, Mr. Burke is excursive, injudicious, and pedantic. His wit sometimes degenerates into buffoonery and ill-nature; his oratory into bombast and fustian. His voice is not, at the best, one of the most harmonious; he frequently neglects to manage it, and in the warmth of debate often becomes so hoarse, as to render his accents dissonant and nearly unintelligible. He has neither a very expressive nor animated countenance, nor does he seem, any more than Phil. Stanhope, to have courted the graces with any degree of success in point of attitude, or the use he makes of his hands, head, feet, and arms. On the whole, in spite of his flights through the regions of imagery, his frequent deviations, his dwelling

upon trifles, with several other defects thick sown through his harangues, he is indubitably by much the most powerful and best informed speaker on either side of the House of Commons."

His speeches, however instructive or full of ingenious matter, were sometimes like those of Fox, too long; both sinning from that fulness of mind, which having once begun to disburden itself, knew not when to leave off. Three hours from each being no unusual effort, left little for any one else on the same side to say. Some discontent was thence occasionally engendered among several of the older, as well as a few of the younger and more aspiring members, at being thus thrown into the shade; yet Burke and Fox made it their boast to bring forward rising talent. One of the former class, Mr. Anstruther, is said to have complained, after the disunion of 1791, of Mr. Burke being more of a monopolist in that way than was agreeable, though he admitted him to be "undoubtedly the best informed man in either house of Parliament, the most eloquent man, and frequently the wittiest man." The three great orators of the age sinned in this way nearly alike. A modern writer of merit says, "Both orators (Mr. Fox and Mr. Pitt) were verbose, the former by his repetitions, the latter by his amplifications." To this may be added, that Mr. Burke's fault was fulness—a profusion of illustrative matter—mostly original, commonly powerful, always various—but even variety will not at all times compensate for length. Such a defect arising from an affluent mind we are disposed to think more venial than that of either of his contemporaries in *repetitions* or *amplifications*. There are moments indeed when the best speakers, especially when out of power, cannot obtain an attentive hearing from hungry and impatient auditors. A debater must often wait for the *mollissima tempora fandi*; and the great subject of this sketch in this respect, himself particularly commends Charles Townshend's skill as "hitting the house between wind and water."

From occasional disinclination in Mr. Pitt's friends to hear Burke after that gentleman became first minister, and of the same feeling on his own side after the disunion with Fox, party spirit has exaggerated this temporary distaste into a story that he was rarely heard with pleasure. Even a witticism has been coined for the purpose—that he was known as the "Dinner-bell." Such representations overshoot their mark,

and shew simply a hostile or depreciatory spirit. Were the account true we should be compelled to look upon the annals of the proceedings of the House of Commons as little better than fables. For from his first session to his last, from the time the Duke of Grafton in 1766 wished him to join the Ministry as "the readiest man on all points in the House," to the confession just given of an opponent in 1792, we find there quite a different representation of facts. His speeches likewise we suppose, may still speak for themselves. And if friends and foes, without exception, during that long period admit that they have no equal—that he possessed boundless powers of argument, knowledge, imagination, and wit, what are we to conclude of the taste or judgment of those who tell us they cared not for either, and did not, or would not listen to him? Are we to take the confession as an estimate of their capacity to judge, or a proof of their fairness? Should such men ever have been permitted to be members of a House which they served only to lower and to encumber? The truth is, the term in question is of recent origin, and comes from the remnants of the adherents of Mr. Fox, who have never forgiven, and as long as one of the race survives never will forgive, the insignificance to which the party was reduced by the secession of Burke. But they should not be allowed with impunity to wage eternal war against his fame.*

* It would have been unnecessary to notice the phrase here, had it not been transferred to a recent and valuable history, that of Lord Mahon. While just to Burke in other respects, his Lordship has been betrayed, no doubt inadvertently, into giving place as a historical truth to what originated loosely as an after-dinner piece of wit. In allusion to this subject, an intimate friend recently communicated the following anecdote:—

"I was in the habit of dining frequently in Gower Street with the late Mr. Anthony Blake, afterwards Chief Remembrancer and a Privy Councillor in Ireland. On one occasion I met there Lord Wellesley, previous to his being Irish Viceroy, Lord Nugent, and several others. The conversation turned upon Mr. Burke. Lord Nugent, after some remarks in a flippant strain, inquired whether he was not tiresome in his speeches; in fact, was he not considered the dinner-bell of the House? Lord Wellesley looked at him expressively, then drawing himself up and leaning back in his chair, replied in an emphatic manner as if to convey a rebuke, 'Certainly never by me, my Lord. I always listened to him with the highest gratification and so I believe did most others who wished to be instructed on what was passing around us.' Afterwards, adverting to the prosecution of Hastings, Lord Wellesley said 'Had the question gone to judgment on the first three charges, he must have been convicted. There was no doubt of his culpability. Law's (Lord Ellenborough's) management, saved him.'"

A description of the manner, power, and dress of Burke in the House, by the Duke de Levis, is interesting as coming from a foreigner of distinction. The occasion was a debate on the French Revolution:—

“The man whom I had the greatest desire to hear was the celebrated Mr. Burke, author of the ‘*Essay on the Sublime and Beautiful*,’ and often himself sublime. At length he rose, but in beholding him I could scarcely recover from my surprise. I had so frequently heard his eloquence compared to that of Demosthenes and Cicero, that my imagination associating him with those great names had represented him in a noble and imposing garb. I certainly did not expect to find him in the British Parliament dressed in the ancient toga; nor was I prepared to see him in a tight brown coat, which seemed to impede every movement, and, above all, the little bob-wig, with curls. * * * In the mean time, he moved into the middle of the House, contrary to the usual practice, for the members speak standing and uncovered, not leaving their places. But Mr. Burke with the most natural air imaginable, with seeming humility, and with folded arms, began his speech in so low a tone of voice that I could scarcely hear him. Soon after however becoming animated by degrees, he described religion attacked, the bonds of subordination broken, civil society threatened to its foundations; and in order to shew that England could depend only upon herself, he pictured in glowing colours the political state of Europe; the spirit of ambition and folly which pervaded the greater part of her governments; the culpable apathy of some, the weakness of all. When in the course of this grand sketch he mentioned Spain, that immense monarchy which appeared to have fallen into a total lethargy, ‘What can we expect,’ said he ‘from her?—mighty indeed, but unwieldy—vast in bulk, but inert in spirit—a whale stranded upon the sea-shore of Europe.’ The whole house was silent; all eyes were upon him, and this silence was interrupted only by the loud cries of Hear! hear! a kind of accompaniment which the friends of the speaking Member adopt in order to direct attention to the most brilliant passages of his speech. But these cheerings were superfluous on the present occasion; every mind was fixed; the sentiments he expressed spread themselves with rapidity; every one shared his emotion, whether he represented the ministers

of religion proscribed, inhumanly persecuted and banished, imploring the Almighty in a foreign land to forgive their ungrateful country; or when he depicted in the most affecting manner the misfortunes of the Royal Family and the humiliation of the daughter of the Cæsars. Every eye was bathed in tears at the recital of these sad calamities supported with such heroic fortitude. Mr. Burke then, by an easy transition, passed on to the exposition of those absurd attempts of inexperienced men to establish a chimerical liberty; nor did he spare the petulant vanity of upstarts in their pretended love for equality. The truth of these striking and animated pictures made the whole House pass in an instant from the tenderest emotions of feeling to bursts of laughter; never was the electric power of eloquence more imperiously felt; this extraordinary man seemed to raise and quell the passions of his auditors with as much ease and as rapidly as a skilful musician passes into the various modulations of his harpsichord. I have witnessed many, too many political assemblages and striking scenes where eloquence performed a noble part, but the whole of them appear insipid when compared with this amazing effort.”*

* Tastes proverbially differ. Having therefore thus heard a foreigner upon the manner of Burke, let us attend to an orator of our own country on the same subject. The anecdote appears in a memorandum to the Life of Dr. E. D. Clarke, the traveller:—

“Monday, July 5, 1819.—While we were waiting at Trinity Lodge for the deputation from the Senate to conduct the Chancellor, I had a conversation with Lord Erskine upon the qualifications of Burke as an orator. Lord Erskine said that his defect was *episode*. ‘A public speaker,’ said he, ‘should never be *episodical*—it is a very great mistake. I hold it to be a rule respecting public speaking, which ought never to be violated, that the speaker should not introduce into his oratory insular brilliant passages—they always tend to call off the minds of his hearers, and to make them wander from what ought to be the main business of his speech. If he wish to introduce brilliant passages, *they should run along the line of his subject matter*, and never quit it. Burke’s episodes were highly beautiful—I know nothing *more* beautiful, but they were his defects in speaking.’ Then he introduced one of his most beautiful *episodes*, taken from a speech on the American war; and repeated by heart the whole of that part of the speech in which he introduces the quotation ‘Acta Parentum,’ &c. ‘All this,’ said he, ‘is very beautiful, but it ought to be avoided. Now I will give you another specimen from his speeches on the same war in which his oratory is *perfect*—where the most common, familiar, and even low technical expressions are made to blend themselves with the finest passages; and where having full possession of the minds of his hearers, he

Some difference of manner may be observed in his speeches and writings; the former having a more rapid, vehement, freedom of style, throwing off shorter and less finished though not less spirited sketches. There is likewise more aim at effect, the sentences shorter and more epigrammatic, and the treatment of the subjects more condensed. A belief

never lets them go from him for an instant.' Then he repeated all that speech.

"Lord Erskine also told me that Burke's manner was *sometimes* bad—'*it was like that of an Irish chairman.*' 'Once,' said he, 'I was so tired of hearing him in a debate upon the India bill, that not liking he should see me leave the House of Commons while he was speaking, I crept along under the benches and got out, and went to the Isle of Wight. Afterwards that very speech of his was published, and I found it to be so extremely beautiful *that I actually wore it into pieces by reading it.*'"

Burke's orations, though certainly not more perfect than any other human productions, his Lordship had three years before at Edinburgh pronounced to be immortal and inimitable; and in his own oratory had occasionally attempted to imitate their style; but having like Sheridan, failed in the design, had like him also soon given it up; besides, he has himself told us, that "he had transcribed with his own hand all the most admirable passages in the writings and speeches of this most extraordinary man." The remarks on episode (though these were not original, but borrowed from a contemporary critical journal) may, or may not be true. They prove nothing, such things depend upon times, circumstances, and situations, to which general rules do not apply. Some of the finest things to be met with in oratory are in their nature episodic. Whether Burke's episodes he improperly introduced is a question to be decided by taste and consideration of circumstances rather than by an abstract critical dogma. In the speech on American taxation, for instance, the characters drawn of Charles Townshend, George Grenville, and Lord Chatham, may by a few readers be deemed too much in the nature of episode; yet independent of beauty, they are not without much of that very test of propriety which Lord Erskine expressly specifies, namely, *running along the line of his subject*. So of deviations in other speeches from the direct line of march of his argument.

The observation of his Lordship as to Burke's manner being like that of 'an Irish chairman' is extravagant, and the account of *creeping along under the benches* likewise an obvious exaggeration, for the act was not practicable. The whole conversation bears traces of that loose manner to which he was prone, but to which no weight can be attached. Burke, on the floor of the House of Commons was, as has been already said in this work, sometimes unduly positive—sometimes with an air, though only an air, of dictation in his mode of address—but vulgarity was as wholly foreign to his manner, either in public or private, as to his mind.—Of Lord Erskine's own manner Lord Byron sarcastically observed, that "it was true he had never heard him at the bar, but after hearing him in the House he had no further wish to hear him any where."

prevailed for a short time in the early part of his career of their being written previous to delivery—an impression arising from admitted superiority over those of his contemporaries; but further observation evinced this was not the case. He meditated deeply, and was sometimes heard to express his thoughts aloud. On new or important questions he committed some of the chief heads of his argument to paper, but for the language in which it was conveyed, the colouring, illustration, and the whole artillery of that forcible diction and figurative boldness in which he has not merely no equal, but no competitor for equality, he trusted to a well-stored mind, a retentive memory, and a readiness which from constant discipline in the school of debate, never failed him. Of his published speeches we have the authority of Gibbon who heard them, as well as of still more intimate friends, for the truth of the fact that they received little embellishment in passing through the press. It is well known indeed that the fragments preserved of several of them were written down *after* and not *before* delivery, assisted by the notes and recollection of different Members, his friends, and not unfrequently of the public reporters. Some of his happiest sallies were the inspiration of the moment.

A dictum of Mr. Fox has been current, which if truly stated must be considered either peculiar criticism, or showing a strong leaning to his own style of oratory which was certainly deficient in the point he is made to undervalue. It is represented that when a speech was praised in his presence, he usually inquired whether it read well? and if answered in the affirmative, replied 'then it was a bad speech.' No satisfactory reason perhaps can be assigned for this singular and questionable opinion, which if countenanced by a shadow of truth in a few instances in our own day, is at variance with the whole experience of the ancient, and much of the greater part of the modern world. Were it correct we must presume—and the belief requires some courage to avow—that the speeches of Demosthenes and Cicero were *bad* speeches. The origin of such critical heterodoxy if it were ever seriously entertained, was perhaps some slight feeling of discontent in the mind of that eminent man, at the daily increasing celebrity of Burke's speeches, while his own containing fewer of the same materials for immortality that characterised those of his friend and master, were less known

or quoted, and might even retrograde in public opinion, as has really occurred, when no longer supported by personal popularity or party attachments.

A writer of some consideration,* seems to insinuate that the speeches actually delivered in Parliament differed from those that issued from the press. This, if we may credit contemporary testimony is an error, unintentional no doubt though not unexpected from a zealous Foxite, who must always be excused where the credit of his principal is in question; and he admits that there is nothing in Fox or Pitt, or indeed in any other orator up to Cicero, to be compared in any degree with the speeches of Burke. If there be in reality as he implies any difference between the speeches uttered and the speeches printed, it must be remembered that Burke published no speech after that on the Nabob of Arcot's debts in 1785, excepting a short abstract of that on the army estimates in 1790. He is therefore not responsible for any variations there may be in the reports given of them from what he actually delivered. Up to the period in question or nearly so, Gibbon who pursued opposite politics, had to listen to him night after night assailing not only the Ministry generally, but more especially the very office (that of a Lord of Trade) which he held, and who therefore it may be presumed looked pretty sharply to what he said, gives as we have seen in a previous page a contrary testimony. He is therefore directly opposed to the writer in question; and of his superior means of judging, from being a Member of the House and a constant attendant upon it, there can be no dispute. There are likewise various scattered references in periodical works of that period, and in fragmentary notices of the debates in other quarters, which convey the impression of verbal emendations only, not novelty of matter, being introduced; and to that privilege all orators are fairly entitled.

✓ HIS WRITINGS.

To the thirst for oratorical renown and consequent weight in Parliament, Burke added the desire of acquiring power and celebrity by his pen. Fame even in the Senate must be stamped by the approval of the press. Avaricious thus of excel-

* Mr. Charles Butler—Reminiscences, p. 166.

lence, he grasped at superiority in both modes of distinction, desirous to show the world that though in a series of two thousand years one of them had been found sufficient for the faculties of any one man, he at least possessed ability to write with, if possible, still more power than he could speak. Of this description of eminence he judged, and judged truly, that no superior party influence, no mere personal attachments, no jealousy, no misrepresentation either by Whig or Tory, no weight of purse, no family connexion however high, could deprive him; for the world at large is an impartial and competent tribunal.

Yet as men commonly deny the union of excellencies in any one person, the moment he was pronounced the greatest writer of the age—a verdict which few of his adversaries withheld—attempts were made to question, what was never questioned before, his power in the House of Commons. Dr. Parr thus alludes to it when speaking of him: “There is an unwillingness in the world to admit that the same man has excelled in various pursuits; yet Burke’s compositions, diversified as they are in their nature, though each excelling in its kind, who does not read with instruction and delight?” When this was written the French Revolution had not taken place, and half his strength remained still unknown. That event drew it forth with new and irresistible effect. He had to contend with much of the political and by far the greater part of the literary strength of the country, at least that portion of it which was seen most frequently in the press, and found not a single second of even moderate talents to assist him. Yet he overpowered all adversaries. His arm was indeed so vigorous as to give countenance to the general opinion that no allies* were necessary to one who was in

* An anecdote of one of the smaller sort exhibits another instance of Mr. Burke’s characteristic kindness. Serjeant Gould, of the Irish bar, then a briefless barrister, excited by admiration of the “Reflections on the Revolution in France,” and lately returned from Paris where he had witnessed the *practical effects* of the new system of liberty, wrote a reply to a few of Burke’s assailants. At this time he was wholly unknown to the latter. Sometime afterward he received in Dublin a letter from him, stating that he had not forgotten his obliging pamphlet, and begged leave to return the favour by giving him an introduction that might be serviceable to his interests. Earl Fitzwilliam, the new Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, being to spend a few days at Beaconsfield before his departure, if he would come over and join the party, he might find the excursion neither unpleasant

himself an army ; for aid would be more likely to enfeeble than to support him. The advice given by an acute writer was in consequence literally followed :—

“ ————— In resistless prose,
Leave Burke *alone* to thunder on our foes.”

Pursuits of Literature.

It was therefore with great propriety in allusion to his power over public opinion even some years previous to the French Revolution, that Boswell, who knew him so well, in a pamphlet published in 1785, applied to him the words of Virgil—

Regum æquabat opes animis.

It was early remarked among his characteristics that to a perseverance not to be overcome, to great original genius, and to extraordinary acquirements, he joined in the discussion of a subject unusual comprehensiveness of outline with minute accuracy of detail. What he says of Alfred the Great, in the *Essay on English History* (p. 297, 8vo. edit.) may with strict truth be applied to himself—“ In a word, he comprehended in the greatness of his mind the whole of government and all its parts at once ; and what is most difficult to human frailty, was at the same time sublime and minute.” The reader of his works will be frequently led to appropriate this remark to him who made it, by observing his eagerness to embrace the whole of a subject ; to leave no part unsifted ; to place the matter in every variety of light, and to apply every possible illustration. He is rarely content without turning it back and front, inside and out, upside and down, so that no point likely to afford aid to the investigation of truth shall pass unexamined. This, which is one of the first merits of a disputant, was also his natural disposition. He cannot bear apparently to blink or narrow a question even when doing so may be supposed favourable to his views ; but sometimes gives the first hint of a difficulty in order to show his skill in over-

nor unprofitable. Mr. Goold, as he told the story, after some difficulty in raising the necessary sum for the journey, came, but too late. The society of such a man however well compensated the trouble ; and he returned to Dublin with such letters of introduction as would have had weight with the noble Earl but for his recall from that government.

coming it. It is contrary to the nature of the man to be pent up within a small compass. He must have room. He is not to be hampered by common-place trammels. He can no more be thrust up into the straitened corner of a subject—a trick which the practised reasoner plays off on the more inexperienced—than you can squeeze an elephant into the den of a lion. The cast of his frame is too ponderous, his perceptions too acute to submit to be caught in a trap which is commonly set to hamper the unwary. He seldom takes a topic in hand without so far exhausting it that we find little interest, and frequently very little profit, in following any one else in the same track of argument.

One of his chief excellencies is in being an original and profound thinker. He continually strikes out something which is either new, or new in the connexion in which it stands, and thus contrives to throw together more numerous and important political truths, intermixed with great variety of moral observation drawn from acquaintance with the world, than any other writer on public affairs.* The same profundity of thought which qualifies him to make so many discoveries in his progress, enables him also to dispel a variety of errors. He traces a proposition to its source, and from its source through all its ramifications, so that if there be fallacy in any part he is pretty sure to detect it. Axioms and opinions relative to our domestic politics which were scarcely ever before doubted, are no sooner touched by his pen than they seem unsound or questionable. Several which might be mentioned he has wholly overthrown.

The desire thoroughly to clear the way before him, to afford the fullest information, to leave nothing unexplained or unanswered, has given rise to the charge of being diffuse. Diffuseness however implies something of weakness and verbosity; and he must be a hardy critic who shall venture to declare that these are in any degree characteristic of his

* The remark made to me by an intelligent foreigner, domiciled in England and well read in English authors may be a near approach to truth as I have heard it from others—"Whenever I am at a loss, Sir, on any public subject bearing on the interests or welfare of mankind, I begin to turn over the volumes of Mr. Burke. I may not find it to-day, or to-morrow, or next day, but eventually I light upon what I want, or something closely connected with it so as to give the required information; and the instruction well repays the search."

writings. He may be full ; unnecessarily so perhaps in the opinions of some ; but this abundance presents ample matter for the exercise of the understanding. There is no accumulation of sentences to spin out a thought, no mere verbiage ; but on all occasions a corresponding influx of ideas which open out great truths, enlarge the bounds or add to the details of knowledge, or unveil the latent springs of human passions and actions as they operate on those institutions which so much of his life was employed in improving and defending. They serve to make us not only wiser politicians but increase our general knowledge as men.

We rise from the perusal of his pages, satisfied that we have not spent our time in discussions applicable to temporary or party interests. There remains the conviction of having been taught what we did not know before, of an impression not previously experienced of general and permanent enlargement of mind ; and these feelings arise from that combination of qualities which constitute his peculiar greatness. When a familiar subject is started we are not prepared to find applied to it genius blended with knowledge, elegance of exposition with depth of thought, ingenuity with solidity, principles with facts, philosophy with practical politics, maxims of abstract wisdom with those of his own experience among men ; serving to illustrate and explain each other. To this task the mere politician, or the mere philosopher, would have been equally incompetent. It is the rare union of the characters which gives such value to his writings as to occasion their quotation nearly every night in both Houses of Parliament as the greatest authority of our time. And this testimony cannot well be disputed as partial, since it is borne alike by Whigs and Tories, by Ministry and by Opposition, by all grades in political opinion, by every man of talents and celebrity in literature, who have united in pronouncing them immortal.

Their influence over the public mind when written and ever since, has long been admitted. To them we owe, not only much of that system of policy which has saved England and Europe from subjugation ; but also the chief arguments in support of that policy in Parliament. On a variety of other great questions of national interest, his influence is nearly as great. Much of what is daily urged on many popular topics are but repetitions of what he has thrown out, and the origin of

many brilliant passages in the best speeches in both Houses whether in reasoning or in rhetorical art, are obvious to the diligent reader of his works. The same remark applies to several popular contributors to literature, miscellaneous as well as those who discuss public affairs—pamphleteers, reviewers, journalists, and political essayists. His works form no small part of their stock in trade; the mine from which is dug out their most sterling ore or the ornament by which it is set off. His works in fact form a vast storehouse of matter, on which such authors daily feed and fatten; his ideas dissected out of their connecting positions and hashed up in some new form to suit the particular tastes of the borrowers, or the voracious appetite of the public for something new, and strong, and striking, but still substantially his ideas. Whenever an impression is to be made, a quotation from Burke is sure to make it. He appears to reign supreme in estimation whether for matter or for manner. His phraseology is often so striking as not to be forgotten, and becomes thence a characteristic and popular feature on which contributions are largely levied. Frequently it is of an original cast, unusually forcible, expressive, and condenses much meaning within a small compass. In the use of epithets he is perhaps too free. They were chiefly the offspring of vehement feeling in debate, but while sometimes productive of powerful effect, they are also open to the charge of exaggeration, reprehension, and sometimes ridicule.

He is about the first of our writers, for Junius cannot be said to have preceded him, who has thrown the rays of genius and eloquence over political discussion. Previous to his time, a political book and a dull book, were nearly synonymous terms. Lord Bolingbroke's pieces form perhaps the only exception to this remark, though some do not admit him to be an exception, as his political and philosophical writings appear to be equally forgotten. Neither has he that groundwork of truth, vigour of reasoning or of language, variety or splendour of genius, which Burke has employed in communicating abstract truth, or in discussing subjects not in themselves of the most enlivening description, but which acquire spirit and vivacity under his management. He cannot or will not be dull even on a dull subject, for while his argument clears the road, his flashes of genius and wit enliven, his imagination adorns it. Scarcely another man

could have produced such speeches as he has left us on the unpromising topics of economical Reform (so said Lord North his opponent), and on the debts of the Nabob of Arcot.

A minute critic may find in his writings traces of three or even more sorts of styles or shades of the same style, adapted no doubt like a skilful rhetorician, to the nature of the topic on which he had to treat. The Letter to a Noble Lord, a considerable part of the Reflections on the Revolution in France, and large portions of his Speeches, may be taken as specimens of a poetical or impassioned style. The Thoughts on the Discontents, the Letter to the Sheriff of Bristol, to Sir Hercules Langrishe, and others on Irish and French Affairs, with the Thoughts on Regicide Peace, and perhaps the Essay on the Sublime and Beautiful, as coming under the denomination of his middle style. The Charges against Mr. Hastings, which are drawn up with uncommon skill, the Addresses to the King and to the Americans on the proposed Secession from Parliament in 1777, the Historical Articles in the Annual Register for several years, and his Abridgment of English History, as his plain or grave style. The Vindication of Natural Society, and account of the European Settlements in America, differ perhaps in some degree from each of these as well as from each other. And the Short Account of a Short Administration, the Conduct of the Minority, and the Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs, present a difference in manner from the whole of the others.

His letters generally speaking though with several exceptions, belong to his plain style. In the published correspondence there is all that we can reasonably wish in good sense, perspicuity, and frequent touches of eloquence and elegance; but less of that finished elaboration which some seemed to expect, though inappropriate to the subjects or circumstances on which he wrote. Politics, party movements, election affairs, and other public matters written generally in the bustle of the moment, were not themes for such display. But whenever occasion required it or his affections were interested, who more impressive, striking or persuasive? Nothing perhaps which we possess can exceed the letters to Barry the painter. They partake generally of much of the instructive character of his writings, the same force of observation, expressed with elegance, teaching the honest

lessons of wisdom without losing any thing of epistolary ease, and amount almost to disquisitions on the subjects on which they touch, especially criticisms on Art. In vivacity, which many esteem the chief recommendation of a familiar letter-writer he is deficient, evidently not from want of power, but of inclination to deal in mere pleasantry upon paper. With numberless claims upon time and serious attention his aim was rather to inform than to amuse.

Allusions have been made to an error (p. 499) not uncommon among those who know little of the original, or who possessing little critical discrimination confound two things essentially different—that his style is flowery. Not only is this not the case, but it may be questioned whether it can be called an ornamented style. All the common characteristics of such style as exhibited by others, are at variance with the peculiarities which distinguish the productions of Burke. If a definition be required of its nature, this will be difficult to give without periphrasis, but it may be termed an impassioned style, the product of ardent genius and strong feeling, studded with bold figures, not laid on for the sake of ornament, but springing out of the intensity of his conceptions; meant not to adorn, but to convey a more perfect image of the mind. Of these figures much is occasionally said. Yet they are on the whole less remarkable for number, than for a certain daring originality of feature not to be found in any other orator, and in few of our poets, excepting in some of the more sublime conceptions of *Paradise Lost*; and their effect usually is to sink deep into the mind, and to be recalled by memory as things worthy of recollection when the same idea expressed in common language would have been forgotten probably as soon as heard. A figure therefore such as Burke commonly uses, is wholly distinct in its nature from mere ornament, and may rather be considered an appeal to the judgment, through the attractive medium of the imagination. In conception, he aims much less at the beautiful, than at the great, striking, and sublime; often he is eminently happy in their nature and use; now and then though rarely, rather strained; occasionally coarse or unseemly; but always forcible.

He deals occasionally though not to excess in antithesis; rather sparingly in climax; sometimes in personification and apostrophe. In interrogatory he is often powerful; but his taste in pursuing a simile too far may at times afford matter for dispute. His favourite and most brilliant figure is

metaphor, and in this he is frequently amenable to the laws of criticism from its being imperfect or broken; offending in this way, like all great and original minds, against the strict canons of art, yet overpowering them all by his genius. An instance of this mingled beauty and imperfection may be taken at random. In alluding to the bickerings with America excited by Mr. George Grenville whose character he is sketching, and whom he represents to have understood more of business and of the forms of office on common occasions than of enlarged and prudent policy on great emergencies, we find—"These forms are adapted to ordinary occasions, and therefore persons who are nurtured in office do admirably well as long as things go on in their common order; *but when the high roads are broken up, and the waters are out, when a new and troubled scene is opened, and the file affords no precedent*, then it is that a greater knowledge of mankind, and a far more extensive comprehension of things, is requisite, than ever office gave, or than office can ever give." Public discontent and confusion overspreading the country like a vast inundation, effacing all former beacons for the guidance of its rulers, and leaving the judgment to its own unassisted efforts, is a noble idea; but something of metaphorical propriety and grandeur is lost by being joined to the literal reality of the "*file of office*."

A metaphor strained to its utmost limits appears in a speech upon what he thought the over-done economy of the Minister, in some regulations proposed in 1785—"He (Mr. Pitt) chooses to suppose (for he does not pretend more than to suppose) a naked possibility that he shall draw some resource out of crumbs dropped from the trenchers of penury; that something shall be laid in store from the short allowance of revenue officers overloaded with duty, and famished for bread; by a reduction from officers, who at this very hour are ready to batter the Treasury with what breaks through stone walls, for an increase of their appointments. From the marrowless bones of these skeleton establishments, *by the use of every sort of cutting, and of every sort of fretting tool, he flatters himself that he may chip and rasp an empirical alimentary powder, to diet into some similitude of health and substance the languishing chimeras of fraudulent reformation*." The allusions in the first sentence of this passage are unobjectionable and forcible; in the second they pass into the simile and seem constrained and unnatural though applica-

ble to the character he had given to the bill in the previous portion of his speech. This instance may however be considered to stand alone in his works.

Such trivial imperfections amid numberless specimens remarkable for fitness and correctness, detract little from the merit of an orator. Abstracted from the subject they may be open to objection, but taken along with it, few readers think them worthy of notice and fewer still would wish them expunged. An imperfect metaphor forms indeed fine food for the indignation of the critic, who fastens upon the unhappy offender as he would upon a thief caught in the act of purloining property, and commonly handles him with little less mercy. But after all, it may be doubted whether much of this critical horror does not partake of the character of learned trifling; for if we appeal to experience, to the facts furnished every day by the intercourse of life and business, we find that though metaphors are in continual use by all ranks of people, few of them when examined are critically perfect. To be so, they mostly require to be studied, and the most beautiful require it the most. In extemporaneous oratory, such as we usually hear in the British Senate, this is not to be expected. He who would stop in the career of his argument to labour a metaphor with minute point and polish, might gain the reputation of a sensitive critic but he would probably gain no other. Few writers, perhaps, would desire to see their ideas submitted to the world in their first words, and still greater allowances require to be made for the orator.

A charge has been brought against him by high authority (Dugald Stewart,) that, though confessedly one of the greatest masters of the English language, he often debases his style by the intermixture of cant and colloquial words and allusions. The fact of such intermixture may be true, but a different inference may be drawn from their use. It is but fair at least, before we wholly condemn his practice, to consider his object.

Having chiefly to address a popular assembly, intelligent, and well educated indeed, but still essentially popular; and on other occasions the public at large through the medium of the press upon topics which concerned the welfare of all, and with which all were or fancied they were, acquainted, he aimed as already hinted, at being strong rather than dignified; bold,

clear, and intelligible, rather than refined ; mastering their opinions by power rather than by elegance ; omitting nothing which he thought might win opinion ; and for this purpose calling in the aid of the most familiar and homely associations. Like Swift, another of our powerful writers, he was determined at whatever sacrifice, to make a deep and indelible impression though never disposed like him to descend to grossness or low abuse.

He conceived deeply and felt strongly, and would not weaken the force of his first ideas by any thing like squeamishness of expression. He was too prone perhaps to the use of the vulgar tongue in occasionally ill-chosen epithets, though not in sentiment. Oratory, however, has a license in language which is denied to history, to criticism, to judicial statements and investigations, or to the philosophical treatise. In the former therefore if his taste, judged by his own practice be often faulty, the error probably arose from an exaggerated idea of his privilege ; for in other works, such as his *History*, the *Essay on the Sublime*, and the *Articles of Charge against Mr. Hastings*, the style is unobjectionable ; in the latter indeed so precise that though occupying an octavo volume and a half, I do not remember meeting with but one or two metaphorical allusions, and nothing that can be considered familiar or colloquial.

It is likewise urged that he is too liberal in the use of terms borrowed from art, science and even the commonest occupations, as these though serving to give variety to imagery, may not be intelligible or even agreeable to the mass of readers. Rarely however do we find them beyond general comprehension ; but he certainly levies upon all professions and occupations without scruple—upon the divine, moralist, philosopher, physician, astronomer, chemist, mathematician, lawyer, surgeon, farmer, soldier, seaman, and many others, down even to the baker and butcher, instances of which may be collected from his works. His nautical allusions, which were gleaned probably from Lord Keppel, Sir Charles Saunders and other intimate naval friends, are not only numerous, but applied with more propriety than a landsman can usually accomplish. Thus in “trimming the ship,” in “heaving the lead every inch on way I made,” a metaphor strongly expressive of the care and caution exerted upon the economical Reform bill ; in lawyers

(who are said to bend their eyes by instinct on the peerage) "casting their best bower-anchor in the House of Lords," and a variety of others. In surgery, the terms "solution of continuity," and "working off the slough of slavery," may not be so easily understood by the unprofessional, as "the broad-cast swing of the arm" of the farmer, and the supposed questions of the agrarian butchers of the Duke of Bedford's acres—"how he cuts up?" "how he tallows in the caul or on the kidneys?"

Another resource for exuberant eloquence was the use of scriptural phraseology. Terms from this source may have been applied to political circumstances with too much freedom though without the least idea of irreverence, but to such as did not know his private character or make allowance for sallies of genius, they conveyed perhaps something of that impression. For instance, in calling Lord Hillsborough's Letter to the Colonies during the disputes, "a canonical book of ministerial scripture,—the epistle general to the Americans;" or "it is good for us to be here;" "brother Lazarus is not dead, but sleepeth;" and many more of a similar description. If the language of sacred writ be ever admissible in general discussions—and doubts may exist of its propriety,—it is perhaps least objectionable when used by a great orator on a great occasion, affecting the general interests of nations or of large bodies of the community, and when neither the speaker nor the subject is likely to degrade it. Lord Chatham used such language frequently. To any one indeed who has proper relish for a high order of literary beauty, it requires some self-denial not to seize upon phrases which stand so opportunely in the way; for they recur continually to memory, are in themselves often sublime, always expressive, and have the advantage of being universally familiar.

Add this however to other literary sins, to "his prolific imagination," which in the language of Mr. Pitt "had so long been the wonder and pleasure of the House," to his irregular or broken figures, to his occasional dallying with his subject, to the too frequent use of terms of art, to his frequent invective, to the introduction of undignified and colloquial expressions—and to how little do they amount? On the other hand, where shall we find among orators or statesmen so much depth and originality of thought, fulness

of information, variety of diction, vigour of expression, amplitude of imagination, bold and sublime imagery? In short so much of grandeur* and energy of eloquence, or of beautiful and impressive writing?

✓ HIS LEADING PUBLIC PRINCIPLES.

As a statesman, Burke's distinguishing policy is to be traced in his speeches and writings. These comprise a useful manual for reference to future legislators and ministers and will be consulted for the opinions they teach and the difficulties they solve; for clear and enlarged views on great constitutional questions; for a thorough acquaintance with the duties of rulers and subjects in their various relations of control and obedience. To his ideas on such points universal assent may not be given, nor was their justice always admitted at the time. But experience has proved they were grounded in sound judgment and in a penetrating and prospective spirit—the first qualities beyond all others for those who fill public stations and for the want of which no others can compensate—and in a wisdom not abstruse or perplexed, but in its application obvious and easy.

It was peculiar to him—and one of the many distinctions which belonged to his character—that possessed of a fancy and imagination singularly brilliant—united with stores of knowledge, of a liberal and philosophical turn of mind, added to having passed much time among books—all the elements which unite to compose a beautiful system-maker and imposing theorist, produced in him a directly opposite effect. He would admit of no innovating speculations into the business of government. He was, if any man was, a practical man. He professed to build, as the wise of all times have done, upon the basis of history and experience. "I prefer the collective wisdom of ages," said he, alluding to Mr. Pitt and Mr. Fox, "to the abilities of any two men living." But this temper, however much in the spirit of Bacon, would have done little for his fame, without that happy conforma-

* "Junius," somewhere observes an acute critic (Mr. Hazlitt), who will not be suspected of undue partiality to Burke, "is the first of his class, but that class is not the highest. Junius's manner is the strut of a petit-maitre, Burke's the stalk of a giant; if grandeur is not to be found in Burke, it is to be found nowhere."

tion of mind which enabled him to discriminate the nature of the deductions to be drawn from it—between what to apply to use, and what was inapplicable. He entertained for ancient institutions that respect and admiration which all sober minds feel as long—but no longer—as they have been productive of good ; and while their effects continued beneficial, disapproved of attempts to alter the practice.

His aim therefore in our domestic policy, was to preserve all our institutions in the main as they stood ; for the simple reason that under them the nation had become great, and prosperous, and happy. It was not his desire that we should shut our eyes to abuses—his whole life he said had been spent in resisting and repealing abuses—but to amend deliberately, quietly, and cautiously. He would rather not innovate at all, for innovation was not reformation ; to overturn nothing which had the sanction of time and many happy days in its favour ; to correct and perfect superstructures, but to leave all foundations, the antiquity of which formed a guarantee of their usefulness and stability in general opinion, sacred and unharmed. “The love of things ancient,” says Hooker, “doth argue stayedness ; but levity and want of experience maketh apt unto innovations.” Bacon thought time alone should be the great innovator. Burke appeared equally to think that in the nice connexion between the supreme governing authority and the people, he was the chief or the only power which could act without exciting jealousy on the one part or on the other. He did not regard a form of government as necessarily good, because it was plausible upon paper, but rather looked to its actual workings ; to its effects rather than to nominal merits ; to practical benefits conferred on the people as obvious to the sense, rather than to perfection in the theories on which it was founded. He believed that no material or abrupt deviation in established constitutions, or in the mode of governing communities, could take place without danger ; and the event of the first great political struggle in which he was engaged evinced the accuracy of this opinion. His constant admonition to England respecting America was—“Talk not of your abstract rights of government ; I hate the very sound of them ; follow experience and common sense ; desist from the innovations you are now attempting ; do as you have always done before in permitting her to tax herself ; and in all ordinary circum-

stances of the world the effects will be the same—namely, peace, security, and attachment.”*

Such minute attention to the usages and habits which unite governors and governed evince a simple yet really enlarged description of wisdom. To the more sanguine class of politicians, it appeared antiquated and common-place. Yet if we required a more eloquent advocate for such a system of sound sense, we have one in the condition of a neighbouring country, where from 1789 to the present hour (1854)—a desperate and often murderous struggle for sixty-five years—scarcely one of the objects for which it was commenced has been gained, simply by neglect of the principles of Burke. The natural frame of his politics far from being narrow, was of an expanded cast. He always contended for a liberal and conciliatory line of conduct in national questions, a disregard of small and temporary benefits for the sake of great and permanent interests; seeming to think that England had lost and might again lose by selfishness, but never had sustained injury by kindness and generosity. For this reason he would not run the risk of losing the American continent for the sake of a revenue, which if acquired he early perceived could be no more than nominal. In the same spirit he called for concession to the Irish legislature—to her restricted commerce—and to her large body of Roman Catholic subjects from the disabilities under which they laboured. He staked his peace, interests, and fame, on procuring justice and future security for the people of India. He contended against many opponents—his friends sometimes among the number—for liberty of conscience to the dissenters; for the relief of small debtors; for the suppression of general warrants; for the abolition of negro slavery as a trade and

* An eminent American, talking not long ago to an acquaintance of Burke, said, “Had the advice of your illustrious friend been followed at the beginning of our contest, I do not positively say that America at this day would have been yours, though in very wise hands, and with concessions to her trade and advancing knowledge, even this might have been possible. But I am very sure that our separation would have been more easy, more imperceptible, more good humoured; and possibly we might have been afterwards linked together by mutual interests as strongly as by dominion. Burke would have saved your country from bloodshed, above one hundred millions of money, and, more than that, have prevented a rival feeling between the nations which may now never be allayed.”

the better treatment of such as were in the islands;* for the extension of the power of juries; for the liberty of publishing the parliamentary debates; for the re-establishment of Mr. Wilkes in his seat for Middlesex; for the enactment of Mr. Grenville's useful bill regulating controverted elections, which met with much unaccountable opposition and found in Burke one of its ablest supporters; for the Nullum Tempus Act securing the property of the subject against dormant claims of the crown; for another which he endeavoured to carry against similar claims of the Church; for retrenching the public expenditure without parsimony toward public servants or services, or infringing upon the dignity of the crown; for a more unrestrained system of commercial intercourse; for a more generous policy towards France and the French princes in the earlier part of the war than Mr. Pitt was inclined to show; added to various other measures on record; all indicating love for popular interests, and the most enlarged and liberal views. In most of these great questions his understanding assumed the post of honour—that is, it did not follow, but led the public voice. He had, in fact, an unfeigned contempt for statesmen without “large, liberal, and prospective views,” for what he called “mechanical politicians,” and “pedlar principles.” “Little-ness in object and in means,” said he, seeming to hint at some of the Ministry or their connexions in 1796, “to them appears soundness and sobriety. They think there is nothing worth pursuit but that which they can handle; which they can measure with a two foot rule; which they can tell upon ten fingers.”

It has been said, that he latterly swerved from the freer principles with which he set out in political life, but perusal of his earlier writings, and a fair induction from his general arguments, will amend this impression. At no period

* Even so late as 1822, when Wilberforce endeavoured to carry out among foreigners abolition of the slave trade, or better treatment of slaves, he thus writes to Mr. Buxton; and the tribute paid to the original proposer is more marked when we remember that it was started several years before his own labours began. (Vid. p. 193.) “I have often thought that some modification of Burke's plan would be advisable. I used to think that except for its not going far enough, it might be no bad plan. The very circumstance of its being Burke's, would so abate envy and silence the clamour against us as visionaries, republicans, insurrectionists, that it would on that ground be almost invaluable.”—*Life*, Vol. v., p. 157.

did he assume the character of a fiery patriot, having on the contrary early declared in the House of Commons "that being warned by the ill effects of a contrary procedure in great examples"—he had the Earl of Bath and some others in his eye at the moment—"he had taken his ideas of liberty very low; in order that they should stick to him, and that he might stick to them to the end of his life." Averse therefore to professions of patriotism, few statesmen paid more attention to the substance; and in pursuing what he thought the true interests of the country, never very eagerly sought, and perhaps never much valued, popular applause; especially if to obtain it required the sacrifice of a single principle or point of sound wisdom. He did not so much despise, as tacitly consider popularity thus earned as of that species which does not extend its influence to the page of history, where alone the deserts of a great man are justly balanced and receive their due reward. In the eyes of many he was, so far as his personal interests were concerned, over-tenacious in never surrendering his own to the popular opinion—"always too fond of the right" as Goldsmith said "to pursue the expedient."

The same patriotism, superior to all party considerations, which proffered support to government during the riots in 1780, "when (as he says) wild and savage insurrection quitted the woods, and prowled about our streets in the name of reform," brought him forward with irresistible power in the still more fearful crisis produced by the great convulsion in a neighbouring country. We may perceive on all occasions a gallant spirit, a kind of old-fashioned generosity about the opinions and character, public and private of Burke, which whenever he saw one branch of the constitution, or any order of the community pressed down or threatened by others, made him fling himself into the lighter scale, to restore if possible the equipoise. Such was his conduct on this most important of national events. He thought it his duty to stand in the breach, even if alone, and in fact he long stood alone; to reason and if necessary to contend with, his former political companions who seemed misled beyond the line of prudence by the enthusiasm of the moment. He desired to appeal from Philip drunk to Philip sober; to pronounce aloud the warning voice to the people at large should they labour under the same delusion;

to point out the mischiefs which, not their neutrality merely, but their good sense and decided hostility were required to prevent. The results of these endeavours were a violent clamour against him for assaulting the cause of liberty. What species of liberty it was which he assaulted is never ventured to be explained, but we should know it was that of France in 1793. What the liberty was which he defended and approved we understand. He has told us pretty explicitly—that it was English liberty—it was that system of things which secured to every order in the state, to the monarchy, to the aristocracy, and to the people, and to every person within those orders, the full enjoyment of as many rights, as ample security, and as much freedom of action as was consistent with the same rights, the same security, and the same freedom of action, to every other order and individual.

For reprobating the former while supporting the latter system, he was accused of inconsistency; as if between the practice of France and the practice of England there prevailed the slightest affinity—wide as vice and virtue, as wrong and right asunder: The distinction which he drew between them, and the election which he made of the latter, required no exercise of subtlety, but were the ordinary results of sound sense and a clear understanding. Attached to the monarchy from principle and from conviction, and brought forward in life by the aristocracy, he professed for both a warm, though not a “slavish respect,” and in the moment of need did them service which can never be repaid, and should never be forgotten. As one sprung from the middle ranks of the people, he wished to preserve that station as well as the others free and respectable, unawed by the tyranny—as in France—of the mob. Sincere in the veneration of religion, he contemplated the spoliation of its institutions, and its subsequent extinction as a principle of belief in that country, with horror. Exemplary in the performance of social and moral duties, he could not see them involved in the general ruin of every thing decent and valuable, without the strongest indignation. He was arrived too at an age when in matters of government, the judgment is out of the reach of crude schemes and juvenile follies; when the lust of innovation if it has ever prevailed in the mind, is cooled by the calculations of experience. His practical knowledge of statesmanship, and of the conflicting interests and passions

of such as were, or aimed to be, leaders of the people, had been laboriously earned. His observation had been keen, his powers to combine, analyse, and deduce important truths from the contemplation of the whole, great as it appeared, beyond example. Looking at such a man in the abstract without previously knowing what part he *did* take, no doubt could be entertained of the part he *would* take.

The greatest perhaps, and most useful of his many gifts was that capacity to point out consequences, which stretching itself beyond even wisdom, became almost prescience. In that point he stands alone. No other statesman has approached him in the exercise of the same faculty, and it may be long ere we see such another. His predictions, though so numerous and various, and which at first by their boldness afforded matter for surprise not assent, became by their fulfilment to the letter in almost every instance, a subject of general astonishment. Yet the French Revolution was by no means the first occasion on which that quality was developed. An attentive inquirer will find it marked in most of the great events of his public life.

He lived just long enough to find himself acknowledged the prince of political prophets; to see the reprobation he had ventured to pass on the most remarkable event of modern times more than justified by the horrid scenes to which it gave rise; to confirm the body of the nation in the belief that it had acted wisely; to convince many of the opposite party that their original judgment had been wrong. Had he even erred in estimating the dangers which threatened our own institutions, it would be difficult to censure his caution. A government like that of England, commonly upright in design, in the main pure in practice, and under which the people have become great, free, and prosperous beyond all example, is entitled to our best exertions in moments of peril. Nor should the existence of a few defects or errors, which after all interfere with no fundamental right of the people and which it is easier to point out than to remedy, be permitted to give a handle to innovators. The fabric of all constitutions, and perhaps of our own especially, is valuable only when the materials which compose it are in close union. Disunited or loosely conjoined, they are of less value. It was the praise of Burke to tie the links more closely at a moment when the mistakes of some, and the designs of

others, threatened to sever them for ever; and by this merit, which is only one item in a long list of public services, has left a name as imperishable as the country which he saved and adorned.

Let it be supposed on the other hand that his mind had been less happily regulated; that his wisdom or patriotism had been less enlarged; that he had fallen in with the views of theorists and crafty schemers, in order to render them a stepping stone to place or even to the perpetration of criminal schemes. Let us suppose for a moment, that deluded by a spirit of insane ambition he had led the van, supported by Paine and so many hundreds of other incendiaries and dreamers of no ordinary rank and talents, to batter down the venerable institutions of the land in expectation of rising upon the ruins,—there is perhaps little doubt but he might have accomplished such designs. With all his assistance, the struggle against such persons and principles was arduous. But with his energies exerted on the contrary side, we should now probably have no constitution to find fault with, and no country, not an independent one at least, to claim.

As a minister, during the very short time spent in office, he was as we have seen, punctual, laborious, and disinterested in an unusual degree. His reform bill was the most important measure carried through parliament during the century, whether we consider the actual saving of money, the regulation of office, or the abolition of places which might have been rendered sources of undue influence or suspicion in the votes of thirty-six members of the House of Commons—a number almost sufficient of themselves to form a House. That he would have displayed a different spirit if placed in a more leading department of government, there is no reason to believe. His integrity of purpose was never questioned. It is possible he might not have been popular. He showed too much zeal in urging favourite measures; and zeal in the eyes of even the higher classes excites suspicions of sinister motives. He did not certainly consult expediency. He exhibited occasionally too much candour in disclosing the whole of his views in public propositions of moment, while other persons in power, with more of management, or less of courage thought it more prudent to let them slide into the world, like ill-news, piecemeal. And having never adopted a

measure of great consequence excepting after intense consideration and the clearest conviction of being right, he could not perhaps have yielded with a good grace to public opinion, had it chanced to set in ever so strongly the contrary way.

Count Oubaroff, Minister of Public Instruction in Russia in sketches of Baron Stein and Pozzo di Borgo, 1847, thus alludes to the qualifications of the Irish orator as a politician: "Among English statesmen, Pozzo di Borgo admires Mr. Pitt; but all his sympathies were for Mr. Burke, who had left on his mind an indelible impression. To the latter statesman he gave credit for an almost prophetic knowledge of European politics; whilst the English Ministers did not in his opinion clearly comprehend the posture and interests of the continental powers."

BURKE, PITT, FOX.

It may be an object of inquiry among such as look minutely to development of mind, to estimate the relative capacity and powers displayed by those distinguished orators during their career, and the rank they are likely to hold on the roll of history. No formal parallel however will be attempted to be drawn here. Each has his partizans, and each certainly possesses peculiar merits of his own. But as it is not the pre-eminence of one or two faculties, but the results of various excellence that form the criterion by which such men are judged and compared by posterity, so as in this view Cicero has been awarded superiority among the Romans; Burke is pretty certain to take the same stand among the moderns. At present perhaps political feelings and partialities may tempt a few—and they certainly are not numerous—to question this. He is yet too near our own time. His great competitors have besides left their names as watch-words and rallying points to two great parties in the state, who influenced by party attachments or those many small yet strong links which bind public men together, claim the same distinction each for its particular leader. But party feelings towards individuals seldom outlive the generation they influence. Half a century commonly dissolves the spell. Men begin then to look around them for some better evidences of desert than temporary power or popularity furnish.* Fame indeed is a capricious offering. Milton, as

* "Even now," says a writer who does not overload him with praise, "while the ashes of Fox and Pitt are yet warm, and their eloquence may

we all know had little reputation as a poet while he lived; and for many years Dryden did not possess more of it than a few writers, his contemporaries, whose names are sunk into deserved obscurity. Several men have influenced our House of Commons during their day whose claim to such distinction few now consider deserved. Mirabeau ruled the National Assembly of France, yet with several popular qualities what historian will venture to class him among the wise, or good or truly great? Even Demosthenes and Cicero during their lives only divided public applause with rivals in temporary reputation whom none would now think of placing in comparison. Such it is almost certain will be the standard ultimately attained by Burke.

No man has excelled or possibly equalled Mr. Pitt in the management of the Cabinet, in tact for business, in finance, in that uncommon dexterity which adapting itself without subserviency at once to the wishes of the sovereign, and to the fluctuating feelings of the public, never during a long period of time, lost the confidence of either. His powers were only exceeded by his prudence.

In no point of ability could Mr. Fox be deemed inferior, and in bursts of overpowering eloquence was considered often to have the advantage. While as a popular idol, as one born to lead a formidable party in Parliament and to extract out of political coadjutors devoted and enthusiastic personal friends, he stood alone, and far above all other men. Mr. Burke never did, and Mr. Pitt had it been his lot to labour during his life in the ungracious work of Opposition, never could have approached to an equality with him in that respect. His wants were that caution, moderation, moral influence and application to business in which Mr. Pitt excelled.

Mr. Burke, on the other hand, in addition to displaying equality in their most distinguished political characteristics, possessed other and various powers to which they had little pretension. We must remember that he had to fight his way in the House of Commons from obscurity, without

be said yet to sound in our ears, how much more are the speeches of Burke read, how much more of them is generally remembered!" A new generation has (1854) arisen since the foregoing note and the passages in the text were written; and it is not too much to say that the prediction hazarded in the latter is verified by the public voice.

wealth, rank, connexion, or political reputation to sustain him, excepting such as he could win each night of the session by the display of unusual knowledge on all subjects and persevering labour. He had likewise the disadvantage—now happily no longer felt—of being Irish, added to the charge of belonging to an adverse religion. When these and the many jealousies and difficulties to which they gave rise are considered, which never for a moment thwarted the career of his great competitors and that he early surmounted them all, we cannot deny that opposed as he says in every step he took, and of which the publications of the time furnish evidence, he accomplished much more than they did for fame. It has been necessary to notice a few only of his principles of general policy here. The detail belongs rather to the history of the country, and would require a larger volume than the present to itself. They embraced during a period of thirty years, the whole of our foreign, colonial, and domestic relations under every variety of form and situation. His views appear to have been on most occasions clear and practical, more enlarged sometimes than those of Mr. Pitt,—more precise and accurate than those of Mr. Fox; and though it is not meant to claim for him infallibility, no statesman who took so decided a part on such a multiplicity of subjects has committed so few mistakes. It would be hazardous to point out any gift or capacity as a statesman, in which he was deficient. In foresight, the first and most important of all, he confessedly far excelled all contemporaries, and all predecessors. Neither of them could like him, plunge boldly into the gulph of futurity and drag up to the surface for general reprobation or wonder the spectres of coming events,—too often faithful, yet hideous and terrible to view!

The same superiority belongs to him in most of the natural and acquired powers necessary to constitute a great orator. Such is not merely the verdict of the *critic* in his study, but he actually exhibited a power over his *audience*, sometimes in the House of Commons, and more than once in Westminster Hall, to which they never attained. "For remarkable passages," observes the able historian of the 'impeachment,' "separable from their novelty, or their striking original importance in idea or diction, Mr. Burke is the mighty master. Those of Mr. Fox were not so distinguished." In the speeches of Mr. Pitt and Mr. Fox there

is beyond all question, a great deal of common place,—much of what very ordinary men would say as well on similar occasions. But it is difficult to read a page or two of Burke, and not feel the conviction that his speeches belong to another and higher order of intellect. The oratory of his competitors was commonly inferior in the extent of information conveyed, in new and forcible illustration, in compass of mind, in flashes of vivid originality, in a vigorous phraseology seldom to be forgotten. It was inferior in not impressing the mind with the same feeling of enlarged wisdom in the speaker; in wit and ridicule; in pathos; in imagery; in force of invective, a useful though sometimes dangerous power; in that kindling of genius called by the critics the eloquence of passion, and on important questions an essential element to commanding success. He imparts to our view something like an ocean of mind, at once deep and boundless—and has left behind evidences of a genius for politics more capacious than any one else has ever exhibited, if indeed any rival in such studies ever existed. Even on ordinary affairs he rarely sinks to an ordinary level—there is always something thrown in to relieve his treatment of them from such an imputation. He trifles occasionally on smaller points of wit or figurative ornament as a genius will do, but as has been said of Shakespeare, he is always great upon a great occasion.

If in so many requisites which go to the formation of a distinguished political character, we find Burke on a level, or above his great rivals in public life, there are others of moment in which comparison tells to their disadvantage.

As a writer, it is scarcely necessary to advert to his vast superiority. Mr. Pitt indeed did not contend for the honours of the press. Mr. Fox composed slowly and with labour, very unlike his mode of speaking, sometimes complaining of the difficulty of the process as vexatious. Burke was rapid in composition, though patient in a greater degree than is common with men of genius in careful revision; and independent of mere literary execution, there are more traces of vigour of thought, and ingenuity and originality of mind in any one of his pamphlets than in Fox's history. In extent of general knowledge he far excelled both. As a man of general genius—Sir Joshua Reynolds certainly had him in view in the definition of that quality—who seemed capable of surpassing in any pursuit to which he chose to

devote attention, he excelled them. As a philosophical critic, the *Essay on the Sublime and Beautiful* gave him a place to which they had no pretension. And in that general truth of deduction from experience and from appearances, whether in the moral, natural, or political world which constitutes the philosopher, his superiority is equally incontestable. In powers of conversation he far excelled them. In correct taste and love for the arts he excelled them. In classical learning he was probably on a par with either; and in classical criticism though both were excellent critics, he had perhaps the advantage in depth and ingenuity. Even in epistolary communication which forms the business of some men and the occasional occupation of all, the same superiority over his great rivals whether in the familiar letter or the more formal exposition of public business, is as obvious as in any other of his talents. Of his pre-eminence over Fox, with whom he has been more particularly compared in the various excellencies constituting a great man, Dr. Johnson with characteristic precision stated his conviction in a single sentence: "Sir," said he, alluding to some political opinions of Sir Joshua Reynolds, "he is too much under the influence of the Fox (dog) *star*, and the Irish *constellation*." Among politicians he will be considered to be what Michael Angelo is among artists.

Viewed in whatever light, he must always be considered a most extraordinary man—extraordinary in his faculties, in his acquirements, in his rise, in his progress, and in his end; for the last efforts of his mind rise in power and in brilliancy over almost any that preceded them. He lived in a momentous time, and seemed made for such an occasion by the most active participation in all great questions, or strong excitements, and the splendour of the exertions to which they gave rise. He may be considered in politics what the great reformers were in religion—possessed of zeal, powers, and perseverance without limit, to influence the minds of men from their customary channels of thought to such as he deemed more consistent with truth and public advantage. He was peculiarly fitted for being the great presiding genius of a country, and his contemporaries should have been his ministers. *He* should have originated measures, and they have carried them into execution. Public servants as able as they were, and if that be any criterion of merit, infinitely

more successful, have been often seen in the world ; but it has required two thousand years to produce one Cicero and one Burke. Great as his fame is, it has not yet probably reached its height. Whether viewed as statesman, orator, or writer, he is destined to descend to a late period of time ; to gain in reputation as he recedes from the fleeting animosities and prejudices of the day ; and perhaps to excite regret and surprise that we should have among us the great master-spirit in political prophesying and teaching, and not oftener have profited by his admonitions.

"If we are to praise a man in proportion to his usefulness," says a distinguished German writer whose volumes find their way through Europe, "I am persuaded that no task can be more difficult than that of doing justice to another Englishman, his (Sir W. Jones's) contemporary, the Statesman and Orator Burke. This man has been to his own country and to all Europe—in a very particular manner to Germany—a new light of political wisdom and moral experience. He corrected his age when it was at the height of its revolutionary frenzy ; and without maintaining any system of philosophy he seems to have seen farther into the true nature of society, and to have more clearly comprehended the effect of religion in connecting individual security with national welfare, than any philosopher, or any system of philosophy, of any preceding age."*

"This I deliberately and steadily affirm," writes the learned Dr. Farr, after an animated eulogy on him as a critic and philosopher, "that of all the men who are, or who ever have been, eminent for energy or splendour of eloquence, or for skill and grace in composition, there is not one who, in genius or erudition, in philanthropy or piety, or in any of the qualities of a wise and good man, surpasses Burke."

"I have studied the ancients long and attentively," said the late eminent Dr. John Gillies—known for his history of ancient Greece, of the World from Alexander to Augustus, and for translations from Aristotle—in a long conversation with me concerning the subject of these pages, "and I have found nothing in any of their orators superior nay scarcely equal to what we see in Burke."

"If," said Mr. Fox, in opening the first charge of the

* Schlegel's Lectures on Literature, vol. ii. p. 278.

impeachment, and the allusion to Mr. Burke was rapidly caught by the auditory, "If we are no longer in shameful ignorance of India; if India no longer makes us blush in the eyes of Europe; let us know and feel our *obligations to him*—whose admirable resources of opinion and affection—whose untiring toil, sublime genius, and high aspiring honour, raised him up conspicuous among the most beneficent worthies of mankind!"

"To whom," said Sheridan in happier moments before the false lights of French liberty misled him, when he had occasion to mention Burke's name—"I look up with homage, whose genius is commensurate to his philanthropy, whose memory will stretch itself beyond the fleeting objects of any little, partial, temporary shuffling, through the whole range of human knowledge and honourable aspirations after human good, as large as the system which forms life, as lasting as those objects which adorn it." "A gentleman," he adds, "whose abilities, happily for the glory of the age in which we live, are not intrusted to the perishable eloquence of the day, but will live to be the admiration of that hour when all of us shall be mute, and most of us forgotten."

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